

MOCK AUCTIONS.

PASSING along one of the most crowded thoroughfares of the city the other day, I was attracted by the arrangements made for the sale of a "respectable tradesman's stock." Large placards pasted on the shop-windows announced that Mr. Ichabod had the honour to announce to the nobility and public in general, that he was about to dispose of a valuable stock by order of the proprietors; and long slips of paper shooting diagonally across the whole shop-front, like a flight of rockets, inscribed with "This Day," in large letters, testified to the vehement desire of the proprietor to realise without more delay. The dishevelled state of the goods in the window well seconded these outward appearances. A plated coffee-pot, of rather florid design, with a deep smear of tarnish across its bulging sides; a candlestick, with resplendent glass pendules, ornamented with doubtful ormolu work; and a lady's work-table of papier mâché, varnished to within an inch of its life, and so deposited as to show the full glare of the flagrant rose wreath that ornamented its top; spoke of the rather mixed nature of the stock now in the agonies of dissolution within.

As I entered the shop the bidding was not very active, nor the company large. Indeed, the group of bidders looked almost as lifeless as the figures in a stereoscope, and the lots passed with pantomimic silence. No one looked round, but it was evident my footstep over the threshold gave a gentle electric shock of pleasure to the assembled company. The auctioneer seemed suddenly to find his voice, the bidding grew brisker, and the splendid china tea-service, as if by magic, seemed to become the object of keen contention; the whole company leapt at once into life, as though I were the fairy prince who had suddenly broken into the enchanted palace.

I ventured to ask a tall gentleman, who volunteered to assist me in my biddings, for a catalogue. They were not selling by catalogue that day, he said, as the trade were not there; and I should therefore embrace the opportunity to get bargains. Taking a quiet but comprehensive glance around me, I certainly could neither see any signs, nor smell the proximity, of that lively race which is indigenous to ordinary sale-rooms. There was a tall man, dressed in a brown coat, that hung down to his feet; with a face long and lean, and of a most simple expression. His modest white neckcloth, neatly folded beneath his old-fashioned waistcoat, and his rather large hands encased in black woollen gloves, gave me the idea that he was the respected deacon of some provincial Zion. As a contrast to this unsophisticated individual, there was a rough man in top boots and corduroys, with a huge comforter tied in a great bunch under his chin; whilst in his hand he held a cudgel, greatly exaggerated about the knots. He might have been a drover. The rest of the company were remarkably noseey and breast-pinny.

"Come, show the gentlemen the matchless Dresden service," said the auctioneer.

Whereat the company instantly seemed to part down the middle, and I found myself raked by the piercing eye of the presiding functionary.

My friend the deacon appeared all of a sudden to take an amazing fancy to that splendid service, for he stretched out a nervous hand to examine a cup, when it slipped through his fingers, and broke upon the floor. My friend apologised for his awkwardness, and begged to be allowed to pay for his mishap; but the auctioneer would not hear of it—it was quite an accident—he was among gentlemen, who would treat him as such.

My heart began to soften; possibly it was a genuine concern after all: I actually made a bid. It had been a bad day, I suppose, in consequence of the "absence of the trade." Be that as it may, the sight of a naked foot-mark did not more astonish Crusoe than did apparently the sound of my voice the assembled company. "One pound ten," I cried.

"Why, you're a making game," said my tall friend. "Why it's a hundred guinea set.—Two pound ten."

"It's only Stafford ware," I retorted.

"Only Stafford, is it?" he remarked, with a faint laugh: "I should say they was Sayvres."

But the auctioneer held me with his "glittering eye."

"Let the gentleman come forward," he said: "they was made for the Grand Dook of Saxe Coburg, only they wasn't finished in time."

"Indeed," said I: "that was a pity."

I suppose there must have been some peculiarity in the tone of my voice, for I instantly perceived that I had incurred the displeasure of the gentlemen around me, and my position was beginning to grow rather unpleasant, as all the noses and breast-pins converged upon me in rather a threatening attitude. The deacon alone looked mildly on.

At that moment I was aware of a fresh footstep on the floor, the same gentle electric shock as before seemed to pervade the bidders and the rather bloated gentleman in the rostrum gave a slightly perceptible start, just as a spider does when a bluebottle blunders into his web. And now I discovered how it was that the company could see so well what was going on behind them; for on the opposite wall hung a looking-glass, and in it I could see an unmistakable country clergyman timidly looking at a "genuine Raphael."

"Jim," said the auctioneer, *sotto voce*, "tip us the old master."

In a moment the "Grand Dook" tea-service was knocked down to a sulky-looking bidder in a blue bird's-eye cravat, and Jim staggered beneath the weight of a remarkably brown Virgin, encased in a resplendent frame.

"The pictures I have the honour to submit to your bidding this morning, gentlemen," commenced the auctioneer, in the most impressive voice, "have been brought to the hammer under the most peculiar—I may say unprecedented—circumstances. The late proprietor—a nobleman—ransacked the stores of foreign collectors, and purchased, regardless of cost, the few, but priceless gems I now have the honour of submitting to your notice. Unfortunately, circumstances have compelled his representatives to realise, without a moment's delay,—in short, they must be sold for what they will fetch. The first lot, gentlemen, is

a genuine Raphael, originally in the collection of Cardinal Ritz. It is a genuine engraved picture," remarked the official, examining some apocryphal memorandum through his gold eye-glass, "termed the Virgin and Twilight, which accounts for the dark and solemn nature of the subject."

The noses and the pins now became violently agitated.

"Ah! that ain't for such as we," said one.

"No," said another, "it's a pity it should be put up when the trade ain't here."

"Come, gentlemen, make your bidding," said the voice from the rostrum, "you must have it at your own price."

"Well, then, just to give it a start," said the gentleman in the blue bird's eye neckerchief, "I'll say 5*l*."

"What! for this untouched picture," almost shrieked the horror-stricken auctioneer. "More likely 500*l*."

The noses began to grow excited. They actually seemed bidding "five pun ten," "six pun," "seven pun;" but the clergyman made no sign.

"Gentlemen," said the auctioneer, wiping the sweat of agony from his brow, "I cannot rob my employers in this way. What! only seven pounds for this untouched gem of Italian art! Jim, run round to the executor's, in Doctors' Commons, and ask him if I must throw the pictures away into the dirt in this manner."

Jim obeyed the order; and, calculating the time it would take to go and return, in pipes and goes, quietly stepped into an adjoining tap.

In about five minutes he rushed back. "Mr. — says they must go at any price—they must be closed at once."

"Very well. You hear what he says, gentlemen; it's not my fault—go it shall;" and with a look of horror he held the hammer aloft,—“Going at seven pounds."

"Let me look," gently interposed the clergyman. He looked, wiped the Virgin's face with a wetted handkerchief, and scrutinised the worm-eaten panel, enriched with the seal of the art-loving Cardinal.

"Here's the buyer for the National Gallery coming," remarked the tall man by his side.

"Ah! I thought he wouldn't be far off to-day," said the auctioneer, exultingly.

"Eight pounds!" cried the clergyman.

"Wait a minute," said the auctioneer; "here's a gentleman coming that knows what a good picture is."

"Nine pounds!" shouted the deacon.

"Fifteen pounds!" cried the new comer, scarcely deigning to look at the gem.

"Twenty pounds!" faintly but hastily rejoined the clergyman.

The purchaser for the National Gallery, for some unaccountable reason which Mr. Conyngham should inquire into, would not go further, and the clergyman gained what the nation should have possessed—so said the auctioneer.

"You've been and made your fortune, sir," said the deacon; and so the worthy purchaser seemed to think.

I fancy I can see that dear old black-gaitered pastor, in his snug vicarage, standing, some fine

morning, before his priceless gem, his finger and thumb between the fresh-cut leaves of this week's *Guardian*, pointing out its beauties to a brother of the cloth.

"Snapped it up, sir, for a bagatelle, under the nose of the National Gallery purchaser—a gem from the Pitti Palace—sold under a distress for rent."

What other ancient masters were given away on that day I know not; for, happening to hazard some mild doubt as to the genuineness of the Raphael, the deacon, to my amazement and horror, addressed a few words to my private ear that I never dreamed could have fallen from his simple evangelical lips. I shall not repeat them, but merely content myself by saying, that with Doric strength he intimated that I had better depart, or it would be the worse for me; and, taking the hint, I retired.

Since that occasion, I have passed the establishment several times, and, I regret to say, Mr. Ichabod has not yet accomplished the sale of the whole of the stock, nor has the deacon yet returned to the duties of his local Zion. He still bids with charming simplicity for the china tea-service; nay, it would appear that he is not yet cured of that nervous bashfulness which led him to break the tea-cup, for I saw him repeat his misfortune, with many apologies, only yesterday; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, I also perceived a pile of tea-cups behind the rostrum, which the benevolent proprietor, to all appearances, has provided against his unfortunate casualties. Strange to say, the cattle-dealer has not yet been able to tear himself away from the excitement of the bidding.

At the same time that we must admire the skill with which some figures in these little dramas play their parts, I cannot help thinking that, on one or two points, there is room for improvement, and if Mr. Ichabod is not proud, I will venture to make a suggestion or two. In the first place, why does he not introduce one or two lady bidders—representatives of those stout females, all false-front and catalogues, who cheapen pots and pans at genuine sales? Then, to make it look more like the real thing, there should be a little more chaffing going on—quarrelling with the auctioneer—anything to break up the ghost-like silence of the bidders. I miss, too, our old friend the porter—one of those grimy individuals into whose soul dirty carpet has entered. Surely the genius that dressed the deacon and manages his deportment, is equal to improvising so necessary a functionary. There is another point which strikes me as entirely neglected. There should be more bustle among the company, more in-coming, and out-going. Why could they not pass out by a back-door and in again at the mart-entrance, thus economising their numbers as they do in grand processions at the theatres? Some arrangement of this sort would give to the scene an out-of-door life which at present is altogether wanting, and the absence of which tends to excite the public suspicion, which might, with great advantage (to the proprietors), be avoided by a little ingenuity.

The next time I pass Mr. Ichabod's establishment I shall see if he is above taking the hints I thus freely throw out.

A. W.



Paterfamilias wishes for a new sensation, let him provide himself with a big basket and follow me. It will try his dignity, perhaps, to be seen struggling amid a mob of children; but, after all, he will not get half as much put out as in the crush-room of the Opera, and I promise him more thorough delight, far brighter eyes, and more genuine laughter than he will meet with there. Say it is three o'clock in the afternoon and on a seasonable December day when our cab drives up to the German Fair in Regent Street. Was there ever such a crowd before of merry little feet all pattering and pushing along the entrance-hall lined with Christmas-trees? Paterfamilias perhaps has not forgotten that cry of "Eureka!" the ten thousand gave when they first caught sight of the sea; but we question if it was half as hearty as the joyous "Oh!" that burst from the mouths of a hundred "terrible Turks," as they swarm into the glittering hall of the German Fair.

Twice in our lives toys make themselves known to us as great facts. In youth, when we play with them and smash them ourselves, and in middle age, when we do it by deputy in the persons of our own children; and, possibly, if you ask Paterfamilias, he will tell you that he enjoys them the second time more than the first—for then there are more to smash, and more to laugh and enjoy. But, if

a man has any heart in him, how must he delight to see five hundred urchins all boiling over with pleasure, whilst five hundred mammas and papas are enjoying their happiness.

In my young days—when George IV. was king—toys were toys, and youngsters were obliged to use them economically; but now there is no such necessity, for here we are in a room where it is impossible to spend more than a penny at a time. I can get anything for a penny—from a capital yard measure to a soup tureen—and, as I am alive! there is Paterfamilias with his basket half-full already. He has a railroad that moves, a duck that swims, a trumpet that blows, a doll that cries, a perambulator that runs, and a monkey that jumps over a pole, and he has only

got rid of sixpence! It becomes absolutely absurd to have so much for your money, and how he will manage to spend the sovereign he designs is to me a mystery. All around him urchins are busy. "I've had one of those, and two of those, and three of these, and four of those." Why it reminds us of Punch's satiated schoolboy settling his reckoning in the cake-shop, only here the boy has his cakes and toys still to enjoy. But there is a sixpenny and a shilling counter not far off, and, interspersed amid the meaner gew-gaws, toys that rise to the rank of real works of art.

Whilst Paterfamilias is picking out his two hundred and forty separate and distinct toys, let us pause for a moment, and ask where they all come from. Reader, have you ever travelled for a livelong day through the dark and melancholy pine or fir forests of Germany? Ever listened to the sougling of the wind through the branches, or walked on the dumb carpet of pine tassels? If so, what has been the complexion of your thoughts? Possibly like mine, gloomy as the Halls of Dis. Yet, from these old inky forests, from the green valleys up which the pine-trees climb like black priests to the mountain summit, rush the torrents of toys which push on from year to year and penetrate into every nursery in Europe. In the recesses of the old Thuringian and other forests are glued, and turned, and painted, the legions of soldiers, the fleets of Noah's-arks, and the countless whips, rattles, and squeaking dolls that go to their last account in the snug nurseries of Europe. Strange fact, that in these grim forests half the laughter and joy of childhood should find their birth!

The same principle that plants cotton-factories in Lancashire determines the production of toys—the presence of the raw material. If the pine logs from which they are manufactured were not immediately at hand, there would be no penny toys—and, possibly, no German Fair. Let us examine one of these penny articles. Here is a man wheeling a barrow of fruit. The prime cost of this article in the forest where it was made is only a kreuzer, or one-third of a penny! The rest represents its package and carriage to these shores, the duty and the profit of the proprietor. It seems inconceivable that for so small a sum such a result can be obtained, for the man is well enough proportioned, his barrow really will run, and the fruit is coloured after nature. A little inquiry, however, at the same time that it clears up the mystery only increases our astonishment.

In the first place, the wood is obtained for a mere nothing. For instance, the Grand Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, on whose estates the flourishing toy colony of Sonneberg is situated, allows his people to select any tree from his forest close at hand for 2½d. Thus the raw material may be said to be given to them. Again: the organisation and division of labour is carried to an extent in the production of these trifles which we can only liken to that exhibited in this country by watchmakers or pin fabricators. Let us revert to the man with the barrow of fruit, for instance. Possibly a dozen hands have been employed in its production. The man who turned the body of the figure, had nothing to do with his arms. A third person was employed to put together the barrow; a fourth to turn the wheel; a fifth to put the spokes in; a sixth to put the lynch-pin in; a seventh to turn the fruit; an eighth to turn the basket on which they are placed; a ninth to colour the fruit; a tenth to colour the barrow; an eleventh to glue the whole together; and a twelfth to supply the final varnish. The incredible rapidity with which this minute division of labour enables the men, women, and children to accomplish each detail, is the secret of the whole matter. Not only do the dozen individuals manage to make a living out of the third

of a penny, or rather less, which is to be divided amongst them, but they contrive to live comfortably and respectably into the bargain. The toy thus completed, has to be packed and conveyed hundreds of miles along Alpine roads and down rapid rivers, until it is finally transported by the Rotterdam steam-boat to our shores, to be again unpacked and displayed by Mr. Cremer in the German Fair. The history of the fruit barrow is the history of almost every wooden article on the penny counters of this extraordinary place. The process of manufacture is the same throughout Germany, but the localities from which the different toys come are widely different. The vast majority are made at Grünhainscher, in Saxony. The glass comes from Bohemia. The bottles and cups are so fragile, that the poor workman has to labour in a confined and vitiated atmosphere, which cuts him off at thirty-five years of age. All articles that contain any metal are the produce of Nuremberg and the surrounding district. This old city has always been one of the chief centres of German metal work. The workers in gold and silver of the place have long been famous, and their iron-work is unique. This speciality has now descended to toys. Here all toy printing-presses, with their types, are manufactured; magic lanterns; magnetic toys, such as ducks and fish, that are attracted by the magnet; mechanical toys, such as running mice and conjuring tricks, also come from Nuremberg. The old city is pre-eminent in all kinds of toy diablerie. Here science puts on the conjuror's jacket, and we have a manifestation of the Germanesque spirit of which their Albert Durer was the embodiment. The more solid articles which attract boyhood, such as boxes of bricks, buildings, &c., of plain wood, come from Grünhainscher, in Saxony.

Very latterly a rapidly-increasing town named Furth has sprung up, six miles from Nuremberg, entirely devoted to the manufacture of Noah's arks, dissected puzzles, &c. The toys with motion, such as railroads, steam-vessels, and moving cabs, are the speciality of the people of Biberach, in Würtemberg. And where should those splendid cuirasses, helmets, guns, and swords come from but Hesse Cassel, the centre of soldiering Germany. But the workmen of the principality are not entirely devoted to arms. The charming little shops, and parlours, and the dolls-houses—without which no nursery is complete—are made here. Neither must we forget the theatres, beloved of boys. Here and there some exquisite little interior of a café, with its fittings of marble tables, bottles, mirrors, and plate, attract the attention, and the inquirer learns with astonishment that they are made by felons in Prussian prisons. The taste and dexterity of hand displayed is amazing, and the result far preferable to the miserable hemp-beating or "grindings at nothing" at which some of our own prisoners are so fruitlessly employed.

But this counter is fitted up as a refreshment stall. Here we have rolls and sausages and ducks and bottles of champagne and a hundred other dainties; but the children are too cunning; they are only shams—paper. The Berliners who make them call them "surprises," for it is rather a

surprise to find bonbons for the stuffing of fowls, and sugar-plums tumbling out of simulated pieces of embroidery. Now and then we find a greater surprise still, for there goes a rich plum-pudding floating up to the ceiling—an edible balloon.

But where do all the dolls come from? I hear my little flaxen ringlets say. Dolls are an universal vanity—almost as universal as vanity itself. They seem to be made everywhere, excepting the one country that has a repute for making them. The wooden-jointed specimens, known as Dutch dolls all over the world, really come from the Tyrol, where wood-carving is a very ancient art. The Dutch have the credit of their production simply from the fact, that they are generally shipped from Rotterdam, which is found to be the most convenient port for German goods coming from the interior. To the Dutch, however, we are indebted for the introduction of the crying doll, which, I am happy to inform my young friends, cries for a penny almost as natural as life. The pattern originally came from Japan (a nation very ingenious in toys), and has long been lying in the Museum at the Hague. The German toy-makers, however, are now constructing them upon the same model. Fine wax dolls, *with natural hair*, are made, we are informed, at Petesdorff, in Silesia. It will be flattering, however, to the national vanity to be informed, that the Londoners alone are capable of making the finest and most expressive dolls. The French, clever as they are, cannot touch us here. Some of the higher class English dolls are perfect models—the eyes are full of expression, and the hair is set on like nature itself. The faces are originally modelled in clay, and the wax is put on in successive layers. The highest class of workmen alone are capable of this kind of work. The beauty of Grecian sculpture is ascribed to the fine natural forms which their artists had to copy. Possibly we owe to the beauty of our women, in a like manner, our superiority in dolls, which now rank almost as works of art.

It must be evident that where wood is employed as the material for toy-making, it is impossible to hope for anything very artistic at a rate that can be paid by the great middle class. This fact has led to the employment of a substance that can be cast in a mould, and yet be sufficiently tough to bear knocking about. Those who examined the Zollverein department in the Exhibition of 1851, will remember the beautiful toys exhibited by Adolph Fleischmann.* These were composed of papier mâché, mixed with a peculiar kind of earth. Since that time the art of toy-making in this new material has undergone a very great development all over Germany; but at Sonneberg, in Saxe Meiningen, a school of art has been established by the Duke, for the cultivation of the workmen in the arts of design. In this school, models of all the best antique and modern sculpture are to be found, and collections of good prints. To this school all the young children are sent to model, under pain of a fine; and an art education is the result, which shows

itself in the exquisite little models which come from the ateliers of Adolph Fleischmann. There are now in the German Fair models of animals that a sculptor may copy. Bulls, lions, asses, &c., delineated with an anatomical nicety which is really wonderful. Many of the works of art produced by him are copied from well-known engravings, and are entitled *solid pictures*. There is one in the Fair now, representing Luther and his family around a Christmas tree in the room he once occupied. The modelling of this group originally cost nine guineas, but the moulds once produced, the subsequent copies are procurable at a very cheap rate. There can be no doubt that to familiarise children with well-designed toys is a very important step towards educating the race in the love of art. We cannot help thinking, however, that what the future man will gain, the child will lose. If we make our toys too good, they will either be used as ornaments, or children will be stinted of their full enjoyment of them, for fear they may be injured—which God forbid. It may be very wrong, and possibly I am inculcating very destructive principles, but I cannot help thinking that a judicious smashing of toys now and then is a very healthy juvenile occupation.

There are some little monsters we know, that will keep their toys without speck or spot for years, but they are doomed to die old maids or bachelors. Besides, how could we better or earlier satisfy the analytic spirit that is within us, than by breaking open the drummer boy to see what makes him drum? With this destructive view of the subject, we think Mr. Cremer, the proprietor of the Fair, is entitled to the thanks of every paterfamilias in the kingdom, for at a penny a-piece our children may break their toys to their heart's content. How many of these penny toys does my reader imagine are here sold day by day? Fifty pounds' worth! A little calculation shows that this sum represents 12,000 toys. Now, calculating each toy to produce only ten occasions of enjoyment, we have 120,000 bursts of merriment dispersed every day about Christmas time to the rising generation of London alone, to say nothing of the enjoyment produced by the higher priced toys. How that joy is reflected by the fond mothers' eyes a hundred fold, I need not say; and as to going on with the calculation, that is quite out of the question.

The Saxon is the great consumer of the toys produced by the Saxon. England and America take more toys than any other nation. The value of the toys imported to England alone in the year 1846 was 1,500,000 florins; and the paper and packthread with which they were packed cost 25,000 florins, or 2100*l*.

Whilst Paterfamilias toils after me with his hand-basket, let me draw the attention of my young friends to the old monk near the doorway, who carries in one hand a Christmas tree, whilst he holds in the other a birch for naughty boys, but over his shoulder we see a bag of toys for the good ones. This is St. Nicholas, the patron of children. On Christmas Eve it is the fashion throughout France and Germany, to prepare the children of the household for his nocturnal visit. Refreshment is laid for himself, and hay and

* The toys exhibited at the Great Exhibition were purchased by Mr. Cremer, of Bond Street, and formed the foundation of the present German Fair. The Great Exhibition has certainly borne no more welcome fruit to children than the establishment of this fountain of pleasure.

other provender for his ass. In the morning the eager children find the food and provender gone, but in their place all kinds of beautiful toys. Mr. Cremer is our St. Nicholas, and does the business of the old monk without any mystery, but in an equally satisfactory manner.



HOLLYLEAF.

THE GLACIERS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

A VAST number of my readers would be inclined to stare at anybody who began to talk of the glaciers of Great Britain, and would perhaps set him down as a person of neglected education, but they would change their opinion if taken to see the actual places where these things occurred, and the unmistakeable marks that they have left behind. Tourists who fancy that the Alps or the Dovrefeld are the only European localities, which have ever been the centre of perpetual snow, should go and examine the traces of ice so frequently to be found in the mountain ranges of North Wales or Cumberland, and they will be able to compare the signs of the mighty past with the operations of Nature going on at this very time. What makes the inquiry the more interesting, is the fact that all these events happened at a geological period, very nearly allied to our present era (when the outlines of the country had assumed much the same shape as they now present), and that to them are due, to a great extent, the beautiful variety of hill and dale, and the different kinds of soil for the support and nourishment of the vegetable kingdom.

Before we go back to the past, let us take a brief summary of the present, and inquire into the movements and effects of glaciers as now existing in the Alps. Notwithstanding the large surface covered in those regions by snow and ice, it is clear that many of the glaciers have considerably declined in size. Some have risen, indeed, and swelled out, but as a rule they have receded. Although apparently bound immovably in the fetters of frost, no glacier is ever permanent or stationary; but, on the contrary, slowly but surely moves on with an irresistible pressure that carries everything before it, and it is almost incredible what enormous rocks are rolled forward as far as its influence extends. Certain effects are thus caused, which show the observant savan the indubitable marks of ice, plainly proving that a glacier has, at one time or other, filled the bottom of the mountain ravine which he is exploring.

The most prominent and common of these signs are long lines of stones which settle on the sides

of the glacier, having been detached from the surrounding rocks by the action of the frost, lightning, avalanches, &c. These are called lateral "moraines," in contradistinction to other heaps found at the end of the glaciers, which are "terminal moraines." These last, however, by being constantly propelled forward and ground down against each other, are in a more fragmentary state than those on the sides, and at length accumulate in a great mound which, nevertheless, does not always remain as an after-mark of the former presence of a glacier, and for this reason. By the accumulation, a dam is formed across the valley, acting as a barrier to the lake-waters, generally found in an old glacier basin, but which in floods and storms, frequently burst through the moraine mound, carrying death and destruction in their course down the vale. As the stones which compose the moraines are carried forward, they rub up against each other, causing great wearing of the surface, and also scrape deeply and heavily against the rock over which the glacier is flowing; and such is the tremendous pressure to which they are subject, that not only are the surfaces of the rock often polished by the friction, but "striated," as geologists term it, i. e., marked by straight lines, as though done by a machine, whilst in many cases deep grooves are regularly furrowed in.

Sometimes, also, a projecting eminence is smoothed and worn into a round shape, somewhat like a sheep lying down, from whence these rocks are termed "*roches moutonnées*." There is another still more curious appearance of frequent occurrence, when a glacier happens to have surrounded a peak or pinnacle of mountain, and lodges a ring of stones all round it. After a time the ice melts, and the stones, which are called "perched blocks," are seen grouped at the top of the peak in the most fantastic situations, as though a number of Titans had been amusing themselves with a Brobdingnag game at marbles. Now, these peculiar marks, the moraines, striations, groovings, "*roches moutonnées*," &c., are to be observed in the Alps in many situations, where glaciers do not now exist, attesting their former presence; and many skilful observers, such as Forbes, Tyndall, and Ramsay, were enabled to make accurate maps of their course, extent, and depth, by noting these various signs. But, perhaps, my readers will be inclined to say, What has all this to do with Great Britain? Simply that the same marks which are to be seen in the Alps may be found on the Grampians, the hills of Cumberland, and the ranges of Snowdon. The latter mountain has been shown by Professor Ramsay to have been the centre of six glaciers that flowed from the direction of the peak down as many valleys that radiate from the summit; and in Cwm-Glas in particular, which runs down towards the pass of Llanberis, there is an exceedingly large moraine heap, which, however, since the disappearance of the glacier, has been a good deal cut away by the stream that drains the Pass. It is evident from the position of the boulders—(a geological term for all these stones which have been carried away)—and the striae on the face of the rocks, that this mass of ice descended Cwm-Glas, and with others aided to form

the great glacier of Llanberis, the grooving from which Mr. Ramsay has traced in forty-six places on the hills on each side of the lake, at such heights that he has been enabled to calculate the thickness of the ice that filled the valley, at about 1200 feet. Not only Snowdon itself, but the whole of the mountain country between Bangor, Conway, and Capel Curig bears the traces of either glaciers or icebergs, which latter have caused in the northern counties of England the still more striking and wide-spread appearances, known to geologists by the name of drift. Not only the north of Great Britain, but also of Europe and North America, presents this feature, which for a long time puzzled the scientific world.

Quantities of loose rocks, of all sorts and sizes, cover the ground to such an extent that it received the name of boulder, or drift formation, and in many places, is locally called "till," the peculiarity of it being that the stones which compose it do not belong to the same formation as that of the locality in which they are found; but are probably hundreds of miles from the spot where they were originally "in situ." Mr. Binney has found in the till around Manchester fragments of granite, slates, and Silurian rocks, mountain limestone, coal measures, and new red sandstone. Now, as soon as these phenomena were found to be so general, the question arose, How did they come there? Many put them down to the deluge; but this theory involved them in such difficulties in reconciling geology to religion, that it was soon abandoned. It is not necessary to detail all the speculations and hypotheses on the subject—suffice it to say that the one generally accepted is that of the glacial era—an era of intense cold, such as man has probably never known, when the whole earth lay buried in perpetual winter. From the north issued tremendous icebergs, which overran all North Europe and America, and the extreme cold thus produced gave birth at the same time to the glaciers of the Grampians, the Lake Mountains, and Snowdon. Now it is well known that icebergs at the present day, break off from the mainland, and are carried by currents for many miles, bearing with them out to sea (like the glaciers causing the moraines), numbers of stones and rocks, which when the berg melts, are gently deposited at the bottom, and even now the western Atlantic is becoming sown with earth by this means. In the same way, the icebergs of Scandinavia brought fragments of the old rocks, and scattered them over Russia, Prussia, and the coast of England, as far south as Essex; while the greatest portion of the till which is found in the more centrally northern counties, is supposed to have been brought in the same way from Cumberland, Scotland, and Wales. In Lancashire and Cheshire they are in prodigious numbers, a fact which Mr. Binney is inclined to attribute to a glacier extending thither from the Lake district. In North America, Professor Ramsay has well shown that the great Laurentian chain of mountains on the north side of the St. Lawrence, exhibits for an extent of 1500 miles, unequivocal signs of glacial action, being often striated, and showing "*roches moutonnées*," while the low country on the south side of the

river is covered with boulders and drift. An interesting question now occurs, as to the probable shape and features of England in those times. The outlines and great contours of the land are supposed to have been, to a certain extent, pretty much the same as they are now, with this important difference, however, that it was nearly all under water. Sinkings and elevations of a country, or even of a whole continent, are of common occurrence in geological history, and offer explanations of many a difficulty; and it is quite evident that at the time of the glacial epoch, Great Britain consisted of only a few islands, the tops of which appeared above water, while over the remainder icebergs were carrying their freight of boulders. Gradually, however, a powerful, though slow elevating force was at work, uplifting the country, and ever and anon stopping for a while; and as a proof of these things, it may be stated that sea-shells of an Arctic type (that is, of a type now existing in the Arctic oceans), have been found at the top of Moel Tryfan, near Snowdon, at a height of 1300 feet above the sea. All through Britain and Ireland the drift may be seen on the flanks of the mountains, and in North Wales to a height of 2300 feet! and not only this, but it is found arranged in terraces, showing the periods of rest in the elevating forces. In many parts of England, such as Worcester, Shrewsbury, and the Vale of Gloucester, shells have been found, indicating the lines of the drift. The reasons of the glacial climate are not quite so clear as the results, but they arose no doubt from enormous changes in the relative amount of land and water, which, it is well known, exercises a vast influence over the temperature of climate. The eastern side of any large continent is always more extreme in the heat and cold of summer and winter than that of the west, and from observations made by Humboldt, and many eminent English geologists, it is considered not improbable that Britain formed the eastern side of America, what is now sunk under the Atlantic having been dry land. England would, in that case, have possessed a climate somewhat resembling Labrador. The Gulf stream is the principal agent in causing a mild temperature in this country; but were the Isthmus of Panama to be submerged, and the Gulf stream to flow into the Pacific instead of its present course, there is no telling how far our temperature might be reduced. It may occur to the reader to inquire, what is the length of time that has elapsed since the glacial sea rolled over Europe? A very rough guess is the nearest approximation that we can ever arrive at, and such has been done by Sir Charles Lyell, who from certain experiments and observations made on the falls of Niagara, suggested that 35,000 years at least had been consumed in the erosion or wearing away of the rocky bed by the action of the water, and from geological appearances it seems that the Falls commenced at the close of the drift period. After all, though we cannot but admire and wonder at the abstract reasoning of these masters in geological science, we must accept such calculations with great caution, remembering how infinite (to man's ideas), is all geological time—only to be compared to the distances between the earth and the fixed

stars, about which we so often speak, but which we cannot realise.

What has been the ultimate end of this long continued region of winter? It was a season of desolation and sterility, in order that the future country might be made more flourishing, for it is to the "drift" that a great portion of the soil owes its formation, mixture, and arrangement, and the earth finally rendered complete for the reception of God's highest work—Man.

G. P. BEVAN.



THE ISLES OF SCILLY.

I WONDER how many of our legion of summer tourists, familiar with Elbe, Rhine, and Danube, who explore Europe from the Fjords to Cape Matapan, interspersing rambles among the Pyramids and trips to Niagara, have ever bestowed a thought on our own little home islands. They lie close to us, and there are some which would repay a visit almost as much as some of the continental attractions which drain Cheapside and Belgrave, and imprint half the mountains of Switzerland on the Alpenstock of each roaming Templar. True it is that scenic grandeur is *par excellence* continental, and nowise to be sought in the isles of our own seas. Nor are the habits and manners of their inhabitants, or the productions of nature so dissimilar from our own as those which the favoured tracts of foreign countries present to our annual tourists; but neither, on the other hand, have they been as well explored or as frequently described. And yet they deserve it at least as much. How intimately, again, have we had successively developed to us, with painful fidelity, all the minutiae of civil government, laws, and institutions appertaining to each phase of foreign despotism and democracy from Warsaw to the States. From Laing to Dana, from Inglis to Senior, what feature of nationality in high or low latitudes has escaped reviews and expositions from some one of our wandering literati? Yet it would



strangely astonish them to be told, as they truly might, that peculiarities of government and laws, quite as great and fully as worthy of study by our English politicians, exist close to our own shores, and even under the immediate dynasty of our much beloved Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria! But, as I am not writing a treatise on the political idiosyncrasies of our isles, perhaps I had better begin with the humbler attempt to describe in a very homely fashion the trifling incidents of my own visit to Scilly, and perhaps hereafter to Mona.

There is now a little steamer running from Penzance to Saint Mary's, but before this was established, in 1856, I took my departure from Penzance, one beautiful Saturday morning, on board the *Ariadne*—erst a yacht of Lord Godolphin—then the sole means of communication between the isles and the mainland. She was a famous cutter, of the good old-fashioned build, a thoroughly weatherly sea-boat, such as our yachts used to be before the bluff bows and broad run merged altogether into the lines of the *America*. Good five hundred yards of canvas composed her main-sail; the chief cabin had been converted into a hold for merchandise; and, though her berths were few, there was ample space on her broad decks for all the tourists who, in those days, were likely to extend their peregrinations beyond the Land's End.

Our voyage out produced nothing remarkable. It was beautifully fine, with a light breeze from the N.E. We passed one or two liners, crowded with canvas, with their sky-scrapers set—a noble sight. We saw one of those corked bottles which sometimes become so marvellously the media of long-expected news, but are far oftener the result of the silly spree of some party of pleasure: so our craft held on her course, and the low range of dark rocks which you are told is Scilly, loomed soon afterwards into sight.

The isles are numerous, and subside gradually in size till they become mere rocks. Only six are inhabited, but there must be nearly a hundred large enough to land upon. The chief island is St. Mary's, and the seat of government: that is to say, it can boast of a grim old citadel (temp. Elizabeth) perched aloft on a steep hill rising above the port and town of St. Mary. In this citadel resides all the official dynasty of the Scilly Islands, comprised in the person of Lieutenant—, R.N., who unites in his own person the functions of deputy-governor, commandant of the fortresses, and commander-in-chief of all the forces, military and naval (of whom I discovered four), in the Isles of Scilly. This comprehensive official, nowise overburdened with these his loftiest functions, discharges (especially in fine weather) with inimitable diligence those of captain of the only revenue cutter which protects Her Majesty's exchequer in her Scillonian realms. When I speak, however, of Scilly as part of the Queen's dominions, I do so as a mere *façon de parler*.

Mr. Augustus Smith, several years ago, if report be true, purchased of the Duchy of Cornwall a long lease, giving him fiefdom over the whole of these islands; and never was autocracy carried into greater minutiae, or, I must in justice add,

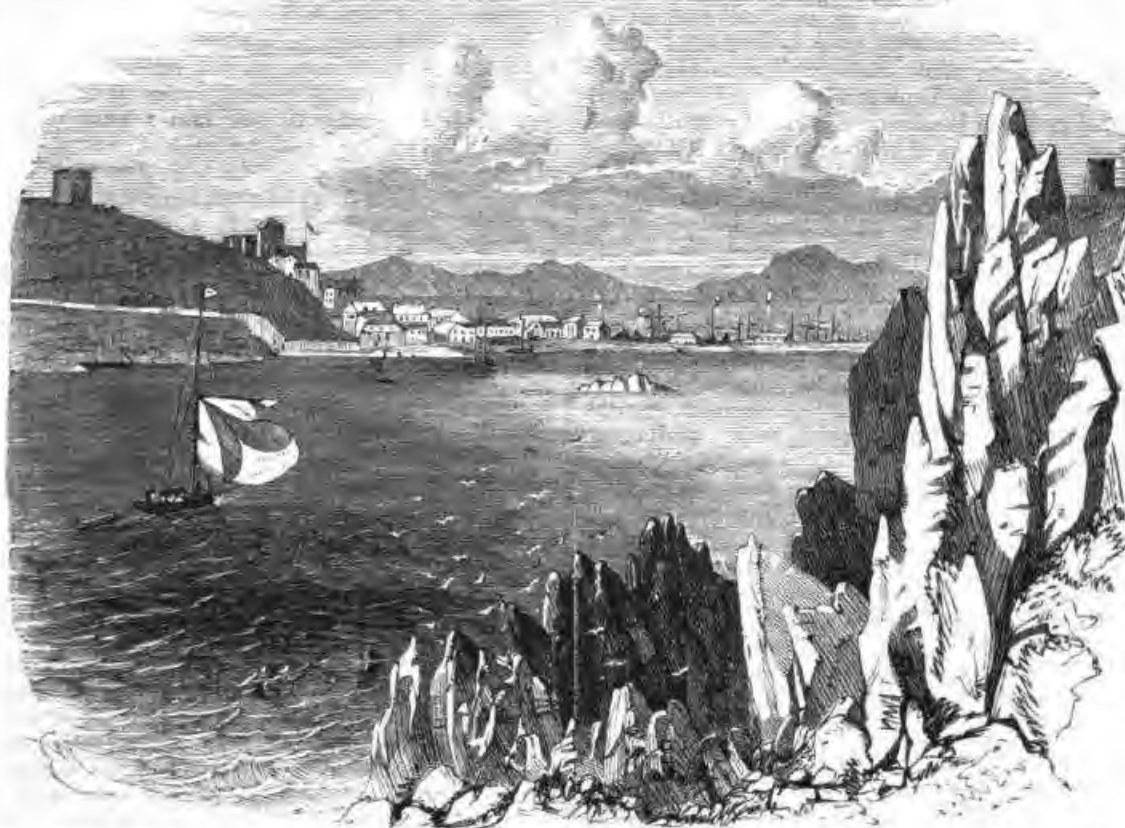
exercised with more hard-headed wisdom and justice.

I had not ventured to incur the hazard of landing on the territories of this insular potentate without some credential from the Lord of the Isles himself, at that time resident in London. A kind mutual friend procured me the necessary missive to the local agent. It happened that I had posted it from Penzance, so that it went by the same packet as I did, and in conversation with the captain I thought it best to inform him of the letter of which he was the bearer, and its probable contents. An unknown gentleman introduced by Mr. Smith into his kingdom was an event to be notified at once to St. Mary's, and I was afterwards told that this was the reason why an immense burgee was hoisted at the mast-head on nearing the harbour.

I was accosted, on my arrival, with the greatest courtesy by the commandant, in a bran-new coat and epaulettes. I told him the object of my visit—simply to lounge about and see as much of the islands as I could before Monday morning, when the *Ariadne* was to return to Penzance. I observed that some delay took place in offering me any definite services. There are no regular inns in the place, but the house of our skipper hard by seemed in some sort to answer the purpose, and some excellent veal cutlets and delicious hams filled up the gaps very comfortably until my letter of introduction had been conned over by the locum tenens of the introducer, who soon presented himself, and very civilly asked what I wished to see. I determined to visit the island of Treco (which contains the residence of Mr. Smith), to sleep there, and return to see St. Mary's. It turned out that the gig of the revenue cutter was laid up for painting, and nothing available came to hand but the most antique and crazy boat I ever saw. Into this were packed some of the Treco women, with their market baskets, and an elderly lady, the mother of the amiable curate then at Treco, who had been my only *compagnon de voyage*. I shall always regard that two miles' sail as the most perilous of my nautical exploits. If a breeze had sprung up, and raised any amount of sea, we should have been infallibly swamped. As I steered her along her creeping course, lolling over the stern sheets, it was delightful to watch the changing view which the bottom of the sea presented. It is usually shallow water among the isles, and mica seems to preponderate in the soil, and richly spangles the pure white sand which abounds here, as on the opposite shore of Cornwall. The water, which is consequently, when calm, of the lightest blue, was perfectly transparent, and save where the sea-plants had established their luxuriant groves, every fish and shell could be seen as plainly as in an aquarium; and on my return from Treco next day, in another boat and in a perfect calm, we saw multitudes of plaice lying flat at the bottom under several fathoms of water. All around us towered or crouched, in various degrees of altitude or flatness, the granite rocks and islets which constitute the great feature of this strange cluster, and give it, with the cerulean waters, snow-white sand, and gaudy yellow gorse,

that peculiar character which, I think I may safely say, no other island, or group of islands, presents. It is strangely isolated in the sea; every terrific storm in winter breaks with appalling fury upon its naked shores, with no tree to check its force; in summer it basks in the calm repose of Italian skies, decked by a profusion of flowers of tropical luxuriance. The Scillonians may indeed boast of singularities of aspect, soil, climate, and vegetation, which it would be difficult to assign as belonging to any single zone.

The little attentions I had been able to show the mother of the resident curate were lavishly overpaid by a hospitable invitation to dinner at the parsonage, and by a fund of information which I thus obtained about the islands and their inhabitants. I took up my abode for the night in the smallest possible inn, which afforded me bed, but certainly not board: and I had soon occasion to appreciate my invitation next day to a meat dinner, the Scillonians not deeming meat one of the necessities of life. I spent the evening in roaming



among the eminences—I can scarcely call them hills—clothed with the shortest grass, and the fantastic granite rocks jutting out in grotesque shapes above the surface alike of land and water. The beautiful blue sea lazily washed the margin of its dazzling white bed with softly rippling tiny waves beneath my bedroom window, and atoned for the absence of the ordinary supply of creature comforts. I attended the morning service at the only church in Treco, which is served together with that in a neighbouring little islet by the same clergyman. I never saw a better or a more attentive congregation, and I was pleased to find that it was the custom to postpone the Litany until the afternoon. The whole service, therefore, divested of unseemly repetitions, was compassed within a reasonable length, and gained vastly in force and effect. This rejection of customary innovation on the proper division of the services was highly esteemed, as I learnt, by the congregation, and being strictly rubrical, was not opposed

by the bishop, who does not however, I imagine, hold frequent visitations in the Scilly Isles. There are several Dissenters, and I heard their cottage worship as I passed their doors. This leads me at once to speak of the highly improved tone of morals which have resulted under Mr. Smith's sovereignty. Not only is a drunkard scarcely ever seen in the Islands, except he be a strange sailor, but thieving is rare in the extreme, and people leave their doors unbolted at night with perfect safety. I was shown one man living on St. Martin's Island who was suspected of the only house robbery known for years, and he was tabooed by his neighbours, and rarely spoken to. The proofs had not been sufficient to convict him. All offenders are tried at sessions or assizes in Cornwall, but few ever go. Pauperism is almost unknown; and the other vices and ill-deservings seem to have been for many years far below the average of any English district of which I ever investigated the morals—and they are not a few. I attribute this

in great measure to Mr. Smith's edicts. He permits no person to bring up his children uneducated, and he has provided good schools for them. He carries his power into the family ménage, and will tolerate no child after a fit age being unemployed. "Tom" having been long enough at school, must be set to work. I question if there be an idle boy on the islands; and if Miss Carpenter were to establish a Scilly Ragged School, it would infallibly die of inanition for lack of the remotest approach to a "City Arab." If any head of a family disobeys Mr. Smith, whether in the good governance of his family or the prescribed management of his land, he gets "notice to quit;" and as every other house belongs to Mr. Smith, his next move is necessarily exile to England. There are about 3000 inhabitants on all the six isles, and I believe them to constitute the most thoroughly moral group in the kingdom; and my latest experiences and means of judging enable me to speak highly of their general intelligence. It is a proof of the real improvement in public morals effected by the Lord of the Isles that he put down smuggling so vigorously, that scarcely any is said to remain; and yet I was shown the enormous cellars under the parsonage house at Treco, the clergyman in former times having made much more by kegs than by tithes.

Thus the rigid wisdom of Mr. Smith's style of government is appreciated by its good results, though submitted to in a spirit rather perhaps of philosophy than love. There is no Mrs. Smith; nor am I aware of the residence of any lady likely to impart largely or actively that indescribable charm to the charities and kindly influences of people in high station, which give them their only access to the hearts of the poorer classes.

I walked to Mr. Smith's house, a plain, handsome, sensible, stone building. It is admirably planned and furnished, and is the only approach to a good country gentleman's house I saw or heard of. It occupies a dell in the island a little above the level of the sea. The gardens are extensive and tastefully laid out, and there was a profusion of flowers, many of them tropical or exotic, and all flourishing in the open air. I was struck with the geranium hedges, reaching far above our heads; the hydrangeas were superb, and there was a beautiful bright green flower (I think the spiraxa). The whole of the cactus and yucca tribes seemed to me (being no florist) of prodigious growth and luxuriance. There were some Australian birds which diversified the scene, and contributed to render the aspect of the whole place unique and exotic. I took a boat and rowed back to St. Mary's, and on applying for admission to a sort of boarding-house, which is the nearest approach to an hotel, instead of being admitted I was catechised as to my reasons for not going to Captain T's as I had done on landing. Having, however, satisfied the lady of the house, I was admitted, and favoured with a comfortable bed and breakfast. This is a specimen of the pride which characterises these islanders. Few will even admit that they are tradesmen, and tell you when you go to make purchases that *perhaps* they *may* spare you the articles you want.

I took a delightful walk over the high promon-

tory, which seems to have formed an ancient appendage to the citadel, and is stocked with deer still. It is covered with gigantic gorse, intersected by public walks, and commands a beautiful view of all the islands, and especially of St. Agnes, with its rocky coast: on it the only lighthouse stood, but another was being built.

St. Mary's, like most of the islands, is nearly cut in two in the centre, where a low isthmus connects this promontory with the mainland of the island. The sea has more than once, in great storms, threatened to break over it and overwhelm the town, which has been indiscreetly built there. It is the only town and the largest island, —between two or three miles long.

We sailed at about ten o'clock, and next morning a perfect calm soon set in: we drifted about with the tide amongst the islands until evening, when beginning to get rather hungry, we discovered that not a scrap of food was to be obtained on board. Fortunately for me, the clergyman of St. Mary's, with his family, were my fellow-passengers. Mr. S. and I persuaded the captain to let us go ashore in the gig: Mr. S. was to beg for the loan of provender for tea; he warned me on no account to offer money. We went to two or three farmhouses, and easily obtained eggs, bacon, milk, and bread. When we got down again to the creek where we had left the boat, we found to our dismay that the sailor left in it had punted himself off far along the coast: he returned in half an hour, having speared six or seven fine large plaice, one of which afforded a delicious addition to our tea when we got on board. They who fry their fish when taken, and eat it instantaneously, will scarcely recognise as the same species such as are eaten after the ordinary interval. As we pulled leisurely back to the cutter, the setting sun shot its long red rays across the water, tinging the ripple we left in our wake with every brilliant hue, spangling with topaz, sapphire, emerald, and ruby the azure surface of that silent rock-girt sea. Not a bird broke the stillness of the scene. The cutter lay motionless, moored to her kedge, with her great white mainsail in helpless repose in the middle of the strait. The broad headlands of St. Margaret's hemmed us in to the eastward, and the long mainland of St. Mary's loomed behind us. The only living figure was a solitary man with a glass, on the highest point of the shore we had just left, evidently on the look-out for some expected arrival.

As not a breeze was felt, and the sky gave no symptom that the calm would end, we all composed ourselves for the night, and a gloriously moonlit bed I had on deck. I was scarcely in my first sleep when I was awoken by the sound of oars pulled quietly and almost stealthily. I sang out to the man on watch, "A boat here on the starboard bow!" He told me it was all right, and I said no more; but I observed her shoot noiselessly into a little cove near where we had landed, and close to where the man with the glass was standing. When I awoke in the broad sunlight at five o'clock, we were floating about with the tide, just outside the islands, and the ships in sight kept us countenance with their

royals flapping lazily against their taper spars. Two huge seals, one black, and one spotted white and black, lay asleep and basking, each on a small rock near the shore. We approached near enough to shoot them; but I was glad we had no gun, or the oil might have tempted some of our crew to shoot one, for they are like the chimpanzee, of far too human a sagacity to reconcile one to their wanton slaughter. A rattle on the fore-castle woke them, and they rolled leisurely off the rocks into the sea, and we saw no more of them after swimming away from us. They were evidently off on a fishing cruise. In spite of all that is said of the intelligence of the highest order of the monkey tribe, nothing surpasses that of the seal, while in attachment he excels them, and is easily domesticated.

The calm continuing all the morning, we again persuaded the captain to let us pull into shore, and look for dinner. This time he assented, and went with us. The clergyman took his family, and kindly allowed me to accompany them. We went to two or three houses on St. Mary's Island, but at some distance from the town. This enabled me to get a good insight into the domiciles of the Scillonians. Every cottage bespoke comfort. Most of the men were working on their bit of land, and conducted us in their shirt-sleeves into an inner carpeted room, with nice furniture, books on the table, and all the accompaniments of civilisation, exceeding that of our ordinary farmers. Yet these men do not hold the tenth part of the land; and work it chiefly themselves, and their families. The secret of this is, that every islander who has a patch of suitable land,—and few are without it,—grows early potatoes for the London markets; and most, if not all, of the very early productions we see at great dinners in May come from Scilly, and are sold by the pound at fabulous prices. I was told that little labour, and not much land, sufficed to insure £50 to the producer. I found the women especially conversible and intelligent, and extremely hospitable. They gave us sundry estates, and one of the men sent his cart and horse into the town to purchase a further supply for the clergyman. Nearly all the women have decayed teeth, and few are handsome. They speak very pure English, and free from provincial accent. Wherever there was shelter, the myrtles, geraniums, and fuchsias grew into large shrubs; but a very few trees were to be found, and those only in a single valley. As we were near the spot, I made them tell me of the loss of the fleet under Sir Cloudeley Shovel, owing to his disregard of the warning of a sailor who knew the islands, and who persisted in his statement, that the course the fleet was taking was directly on to the rocks. He was hanged for his pains at the yard-arm; but not until he had read aloud the 90th Psalm, and prayed God that the grass on Sir Cloudeley Shovel's grave should dry up and wither like the grass in the Psalm. The fleet were wrecked within the hour on the Scilly Isles, and Sir Cloudeley's body buried on the shore, and the legend of the island affirms that no grass did grow on it either before or after the removal of the body to Westminster Abbey. It is singular that a similar occurrence took place in Mont-

gomery churchyard, still better authenticated, and extant to this hour.

In the evening we got on board, and the faintest possible southerly breeze arising, we spread main and broad sail, spent another delightful night on deck, and made Penzance in excellent time for breakfast, having been forty-four hours out on a voyage of some thirty miles. JELINGER C. SYMONS.



THE COST OF COTTAGES.

SOME observations that I made on cottage-building, under the title "Home or Hospital," in the 21st number of *ONCE A WEEK*, have occasioned so many inquiries and remarks, that I feel it right and expedient to adopt a suggestion of one of my correspondents, and relate such facts as I can furnish on the subject of the cost of cottage-building. I cannot explain, nor understand, the statements of some of these applicants as to the cost of good dwellings for labourers; and the wide difference between their estimates and my own experience, and that of several persons who have built cottages in various parts of the country, seems to show that there may be great use, if no great beauty, in a matter-of-fact account of what has been done, and may be done any day.

I have built five Westmoreland cottages, the specifications of which, and the receipted bills for which, lie before me now.

The first was a dwelling for my farm-man and his wife—without children. It was built in conjunction with a wash-house for my own house, and a cow-stable for two cows, with all appurtenances. The cottage consists of two good rooms on the ground-floor, with two large closets—one used as a pantry, and the other containing a bed on occasion. The wash-house has the usual fittings—boiler, pump, and sink, and all conveniences. The cow-stable has stalls for two cows, and a smaller one for a calf: two windows in the walls, and one in the roof: a gutter and drain, joining the one from the cottage, and leading to a manure-tank, which is flagged and cemented so as to be perfectly water-tight, and closed with a moveable stone lid: all the buildings are two feet thick in the walls, which are of the grey stone of the district—mortared in the outer and inner courses, and the cavity filled in with rubble. The cottage kitchen has a range, with an oven; and the bedroom has a fireplace. The cost of this group of buildings was 130*l*.

The other cottages are, however, more in the way of my inquiring correspondents. The four

are built in pairs, on a terrace, with a space of a few feet between the two pairs, and a flight of broad steps leading up from below. There is a good piece of garden ground to each cottage.

The walls are two feet thick, and may stand for centuries. The foundations are on excavated rock. The roofs are of Coniston slate, and the corner-stones are from the Rydal quarry. The woodwork being properly seasoned, and duly painted, there is no call for repairs beyond the occasional painting and whitewashing, and replacing of a slate now and then in stormy weather. A

more durable kind of property can hardly be. When once warmed through, these dwellings, if well built at first, are warm in winter and cool in summer; and they are perfectly dry, which is not always the case with houses built of stone in blocks—some kinds of stone absorbing moisture.

The kitchens and passages are flagged. One pair has a boarded floor in the sitting-room; the other is flagged. Boards are usually preferred. Each cottage has two out-houses behind—a coal-shed and privy (with a patent water-closet appa-



ratus)—the passage between the house and out-houses being roofed with a skylight. There is a cistern in each roof to afford a fall for the water-closet. Each dwelling has a pump and sink; each kitchen an oven and range; each house has two closets (for which the thickness of the walls affords convenience). There is a fire-place in every room; a fanlight over the kitchen door; a window (to open) on the stairs; a dresser in the kitchen, and shelves in the pantry. Each cottage has a porch, like most dwellings in this part of the country, where the protection of a porch to the house-door is needed in stormy weather.

Such is the character of my cottages. As for their contents—the ground-floor consists of a kitchen, a good-sized, light, cheerful sitting-room, and a pantry under the stairs. In one pair, the living-room is 12 feet 8 inches long by 11 feet 3 inches broad, and 7 feet high. In the other pair, the same room measures 15 feet in length by 12 in breadth. The respective kitchens are 10½ feet by 10, and 12 feet by 10. Up-stairs there are three bedrooms, one of which is convenient for a double-bedded room. The estimate in the contract

was 110*l.* per cottage; but some of the conveniences above mentioned were an after-thought, and cost 7*l.* per house. Thus, the total cost of each dwelling was 117*l.* The tenants pay no rates, but a rent of 7*l.*, including the garden ground. These dwellings are in great request, and therefore inhabited by a superior set of tenants, who have, for the most part, done justice to their healthy and cheerful abodes by keeping them clean. They pay their rent half-yearly; and this last Martinmas all had paid before the rent-day arrived.

The nearest cottage to these is one built by a friend of mine, containing a sitting-room with a kitchen-range, a back-kitchen and out-house; and two bedrooms above, each with a fire-place. Cost, 100*l.* Rent, 5*l.*, exclusive of 5*s.* for garden-ground.

Ambleside is noted for its building arts, inasmuch that its workmen (called "wallers" and "slaters") are sent for from Manchester, Liverpool, and even, as I am told, London. The wages of the "wallers" or masons, are 4*s.* a-day; and of labourers, 15*s.* a-week. The builder of these cottages, Mr. Arthur Jackson, turns out thorough

good work. It was from him, as well as from another good builder, since dead, that I learned that in this place a substantial cottage of four rooms can be built for 60*l.*—as I know it can elsewhere. I have now applied again to Mr. Jackson for estimates; and he says that he can undertake to build for 60*l.* a house of four comfortable rooms, with a pantry under the stairs, and a fire-place in each room. For 100*l.* he would build one with five rooms, three above and two below, with a scullery. He has never built in brick, because no bricks are seen here, except the few imported for the backs of fire-places; but he is disposed to think he could build at the same cost in a brick country. Some evidence which I have just received confirms his opinion.

Here is an account of three superior brick cottages lately built in the neighbourhood of Manchester. Each contains the same amount of in-door accommodation as my cottages. The dimensions are:—

The "house-room" . . .	15½ feet by 12 feet.
The kitchen . . .	9 " 10 ft. 2 in.
The pantry . . .	9 " 5 feet.
Chief bedroom over the "house-room."	
Two other bedrooms, each	9 feet by 7 ft. 7 in.

The cost is, in detail, as follows:

MATERIAL.		£	s.	d.
Bricks		37	0	0
Flags		17	0	0
Mantelpieces		6	10	0
Slates		30	0	0
Laths, hair, and lime		16	0	0
Timber		40	0	0
Chimney-pots		1	10	0
Nails and ironwork		17	0	0
Total		165	0	0
LABOUR.		£	s.	d.
Bricklayer		36	0	0
Slater		7	0	0
Blacksmith		7	0	0
Plumber		29	0	0
Painter		24	0	0
Joiner		32	0	0
Carting, &c.		27	0	0
		162	0	0
Material		165	0	0
Total		327	0	0

Or 109*l.* each. The proportions being preserved, it appears that in Manchester, as here, a good cottage of four rooms, without accessories, can be built for 60*l.*

Mr. Bracebridge published a notice, some two years since, of some labourers' cottages built for him twenty years before, which had stood well, and appeared advantageous enough to recommend afresh. A row of six dwellings, admitting of a common wash-house and other offices, can be built for 500*l.*,—their quality being as follows:—

House-room, 13 feet by 12; a chief bed-room over it, of the same size. A second bed-room, smaller by the width of the stairs, is over the kitchen and pantry. By spending six guineas

more, a room may be obtained in the roof, 12 feet by 8, and 8 feet high, lighted from the gable, or by a dormer window. The detailed account may be seen in the "Labourer's Friend" for November, 1857 (p. 180), and further particulars in a letter to the same publication, dated March 13th, 1858.

The fullest account that I know of, and on the largest scale, of the cost and rent of cottages, is contained in the *Report of the Poor-law Commissioners on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Classes*, in 1842. The date is rather old; but such change as has taken place in the last seventeen years is in favour of cottage-building, as a speculation, as well as in the quality of the dwellings. The economy, as well as the sanitary condition, is better understood.

At p. 400 of that Report there are tabulated returns from the officers of twenty-four Unions in the manufacturing counties, in which we see (among other particulars) the cost of erection and the rent of three orders of cottages. I can here cite only the extremities of the scales. The lowest order of dwellings, yielding a rent of 3*l.* 5*s.* per annum, cost originally from 28*l.* (at Stockport) to 60*l.* (at Glossop).

The next order, yielding a rent of 5*l.* 15*s.*, cost from 40*l.* (at Uttoxeter) to 90*l.* (at Burslem and Burton-upon-Trent).

The best class, yielding a rent of 9*l.* 2*s.*, cost from 75*l.* (at Salford) to 155*l.* (at Derby).

At pp. 401 and 402 of the Report, there is a long list of the same particulars, with the cost of repairs, in regard to rural cottages in England and Scotland. The cost of four-roomed cottages varies astonishingly, being as low as 20*l.* and 25*l.* in Bedfordshire and Cheshire, and as high as 180*l.* in Suffolk. The greater number are set down as between 40*l.* and 100*l.*

Any reader who refers to these tables will certainly amuse himself with the whole portion of the Report which relates to the cottage-improvement at that time achieved. Nothing will strike him more than the account (at p. 265) of the labourers' cottages built by the Earl of Leicester at Holkham, in Norfolk, showing what a home the labouring man may have for the interest of 100*l.*, with something additional for repairs; say a rent of 6*l.*, though his kindly landlord asked less. In brief, the tenant has a—

House-room . . .	17 feet by 12, and 7½ feet high.
Kitchen and Pantry	13 " 9 "
Three bedrooms above.	

In the rear, a wash-house, dirt-bin, privy, and pig-cot: and 20 rods of garden ground. The drainage excellent, and water abundant. For the rest, I must refer my readers to the Report, from p. 261 to p. 275, with the engraved plans and illustrations.

More modern narratives and suggestions abound,—judging by booksellers' catalogues and advertisements. One of the most interesting notices of the subject that I have lately seen is in the October number of the "Englishwoman's Journal," and in letters, called forth by that article, at pp. 283 and 284 of the December number of the same Journal. If these letters disclose a painful view of the ownership and condition of many cottages,

they are also encouraging in regard to the eagerness of respectable labourers for respectable homes. To an account of tenements of four rooms each, with out-buildings and garden, costing from 75*l.* to 80*l.* each, the rent of which is 4*l.* 10*s.*, the remark is added:—

"The rents are paid up very regularly, so that this Michaelmas, out of twenty-six occupiers, there was not one defaulter."

This question of the cost of cottages is a very important one,—not only because it is bad for labourers to be charged anything but the genuine price for their abodes, but because there is no chance for the working-classes being well housed unless dwellings of a good quality can be made to pay. At present, unconscionable rents are, on the one hand, extorted for unwholesome and decayed dwellings; and, on the other, it is supposed that nobody but wealthy landowners can afford to build good cottages,—such cottages being regarded as an expensive charity. In my small way, I am satisfied with my investment: I know that other people are: and I believe that it is possible to lodge the working population of the kingdom well and comfortably, without depraving charity on the one hand, or pecuniary loss on the other.

In many—perhaps in most places—however, the first stage of the business is yet unaccomplished. Society is not convinced of the sin and shame of restricting the building of abodes for the working-classes, and of making them pay high rents for places unfit for human habitation. I fear there are many neighbourhoods in England too like, in this respect, to the one in which I live,—where many of the abodes of the humbler inhabitants are a disgrace to any civilised community. If ever there was a settlement favoured beyond others in regard to natural sanitary conditions, it is Ambleside: and if any one spot can be found superior even to Ambleside, it is Windermere (five miles off), where the railway ends, and whence the Lake tourist, on his arrival, overlooks from a height a glorious view of lake, wood, and mountain. In both places there is scarcely any level ground in the whole area. The facilities for drainage cannot be surpassed. There is rock for foundations; and the water-supply is unbounded—unbounded as to quantity, if it were regulated and distributed with any degree of care and good sense. Good soil, good air, great variety of level, and plenty of water,—what more could we ask in choosing a dwelling-place? Yet there is disease, vice and misery which would be accounted intolerable if they came in the shape of inevitable calamity. Instead of general declarations, I will offer a few facts,—omitting at present any notice of such abodes as are private property, in the hope that when reform begins with public property, the owners of cottages and small houses will be awakened to a sense of what they are doing in letting such tenements as many in Ambleside, either by the shame of contrast, or by losing their tenants. While mansions and villas are rising throughout the neighbourhood, one has to wait years to obtain a few yards of ground on which to build a cottage. All possible discountenance is shown to cottage-building: and I have myself been told,

many times a year, for many years, that the people could not pay rent for good cottages, and would not take them if they were provided to-morrow. This must be altogether a mistake. There is, as I said, great anxiety to occupy my cottages; and rents of 4*l.* and 5*l.* are paid for dwellings of which the following is a true account. They were measured and reported upon a day or two ago.

These houses are endowment property, under the care of the trustees of the school. The trustees do not dispute the condition of the property, nor defend the exorbitant rents they are obliged to demand; but they declare that they find it impossible to obtain from the Charity Commissioners the necessary powers for its improvement. They have repeatedly made application; but the delays, the mislaying of papers, the fruitless trouble incurred, has discouraged them. Meantime, the state of three houses, as examined, is this.

Number One is inhabited by a family of six persons. There is no water-supply whatever. There is no out-door convenience which can be used by decent people. There is no opening in back or sides, and no ventilation at all in the sleeping-place but one small pane, which the mother broke the other day, to prevent the young people being stifled (a danger increased, by the way, by the boys smoking their pipes within doors, even in the mornings). The six sleep in two beds scarcely larger than sofas. The living-room is 10½ feet long by 10 broad, and 7 feet 2 inches high.

Number Two contains a family of eight persons. The conditions as to air, water, and convenience, are the same; the living-room is 10½ feet by 9. The rent is 4*l.*

Number Three contains a family of six. Conditions mainly the same. The living-room is 7 feet 2 inches in height; but only 8 feet 6 inches long by 7 feet 9 inches wide. The rent is 5*l.*, the same that is paid by my friend's tenant for an airy, cheerful, well-found dwelling of four rooms and outhouse, on the hill-side.—This is all I will at present say of labourers' dwellings at Ambleside.

At Windermere a new town has sprung up since the establishment of the railway-station, and the temporary residence of a clergyman of architectural propensities; so that we naturally supposed the new settlement to be peculiarly healthy,—all fresh and new, and set upon a platform, absolutely tempting for drainage. Some weeks ago we were startled by news of a terrible fever—typhoid fever—at Windermere, the schoolmaster being dead, and several other persons who could ill be spared. The mortality between that time and this has been fearful. A good man who lived there desired, a few years since, to carry his large family to Australia. He was too old to go by the aid of the Emigration Commissioners, and his friends lent him the means to go and establish himself, with the intention of sending afterwards for his wife and seven children. He slowly made his way in Australia, has paid his friends, and is now, no doubt, looking forward to the arrival of his family in no

long time; but, alas! this fever has carried off four out of the seven children. This is the news which is on the way to the affectionate father!

When one inquires the precise cause of the epidemic, one medical man says there is no sufficient house-drainage at Windermere; another says the mischief is owing to the quantity of decomposed vegetable matter—to the swamps, in short, on the platform; while another declares that the main evil is the accumulation of filth. Whether it be any one or all of these, the mortality is chargeable on ignorance or carelessness, or worse.

While such things are happening here, there, or everywhere, every year, it is a matter of no small consequence to ascertain the conditions on which our labouring population may be well housed,—as a matter of business, and not of mere charity; that is, under the steady natural laws of society, and not the fluctuating influence of human sensibilities, which have always more calls upon them than they can meet. When it is ascertained that it answers to labourers to pay from 3*l.* to 6*l.* rent, rather than have sickness in the house, and that they may have for that rent good dwellings of from four to six rooms, or equivalent attachments, there will be a manifest decrease in the sickness and mortality of the country.

HARRIET MARTINEAU.



A DEATH-WATCH WORTH DREADING.

WHEN King George III. and all his people were expecting an invasion in 1803, there was some anxiety as to the number of citizens who could be collected to repel the enemy. There had been a census two years before; and if it could be trusted (which was perhaps not the case) the number of people of both sexes and all ages in England and Wales was 9,000,000. In these 9,000,000 were included our soldiers and sailors who were dispersed about the world: and thus the King and Mr. Pitt were naturally anxious about the paucity of men. They were unwilling to withdraw the husbandmen from the field; for we then depended for our very existence on the food we ourselves grew. The King's passion was for agriculture; yet, if he had had his choice of a crop, he would have begged for the mythical old harvest that we have all read of at school—armed men springing from the furrows. He considered that the greatest of national blessings would be the birth of the greatest number of boys. He was not out of humour with the girls either; for he looked upon them as the mothers of more boys. His leading political idea was the encouragement of the greatest possible increase of

citizens. He noticed every large family he saw in his walks, patted the children on the head, made a present to the mother, and called the father a good citizen. The royal example spread among the authorities throughout the kingdom. Country justices patted children on the head, and ordered bread for them out of the poor-rate to such an extent that the poor-rate soon amounted, in this population of 9,000,000, to the enormous sum of 4,000,000*l.* Wheat was then at 11*s.* 11*d.* a quarter. The trading classes were going to ruin, or had already fallen upon the rates. No matter! Substitutes for the militia were so hard to be found that the parents of large families must be upheld and favoured; and if tradesmen could not support their own large families, the rate would give them bread.

When the war was over, and the soldiers and sailors came home, and food was dear, and the labour-market was over-stocked, and every town and village swarmed with pauper children (legitimate and illegitimate), and the rate swallowed up more and more of the capital of the country, the fact became plain that the people had outgrown the means of subsistence. An alarm even more demoralising than King George's desire for a host of subjects now arose. Children were looked upon unlovingly, because too many of their parents were not married, or had married to obtain the benefits offered by the poor-law to unscrupulous people. Then arose a multitude of prudential schemes for economising money, and clubbing money, and insuring lives; and at last—insuring deaths.

It was even so. A person of middle age might describe the contrast he had himself witnessed between the days when a row of children presented themselves to the King, pulling their forelocks or bobbing their curtsies, sure of being praised for their mere existence, and therefore objects of parental pride and hope, and the time when (not so many years after) it was an un concealed relief to poor parents that their children should die. That was the opening season of tract-distributing and cottage-visitation under the early "evangelical" movement; and this modified the cottage language of the generation on which it was first tried; so that the account given of the death of children was, that "it was a happy thing—for the Lord would provide better for them." Nothing was more common than this method of consolation, or of accounting for not needing consolation.

It began to be too well understood that, up to a certain age, children are an expense, after which they gradually turn into a source of profit. Facts of this sort, which must be considered in framing a legal charity, became only too well understood in the homes of the poor. By dying, the infant relieved the weekly fund of the family, and was itself "better provided for with the Lord." I will not dwell on this phase of society. It was necessary to advert to it because we are suffering under the consequences to this hour, and have some remains of the perversion to deal with still; but I will hasten on to a time when trade in food had become free, and all the arts and business of life had so increased, and so much gold had been

discovered wherewith to pay labour, and so many colonies were open to emigration, that no excuse remained for dreading that surplus population which had become a mere bugbear. The former surplus population was a real and grave evil: but to develop industry and education, and throw open the harvest-fields of the world, was the remedy. In the same way now there are half-fed families and depressed neighbourhoods; but there is a remedy in such an improved intelligence as shall distribute labour where it is wanted, and in good sense and good conduct which shall make the most of resources at home. In other words, there is enough for everybody, if everybody knew how to use it.

Under such an improved state of affairs how have the children been getting on? I am not considering the children who can work, but infants—infants so young that they used to be dear precisely because they were so helpless—precious, because they were of value to the heart alone—but infants of whom it had been discovered that they were unprofitable to such a degree that some arrangement must be made to compensate for the peculiarity. Under the unreformed poor-law, at its worst period, daughters had presented themselves at the board to ask for pay for nursing their parents: and such daughters were just the sort of mothers to sit down, with their baby on their lap, to calculate the gain of insuring it in a burial-club. One of them told us, a few years ago, how she managed. She put arsenic on her breasts when she suckled her babies, as soon as they grew expensive and troublesome. She had sent eight out of the world in this way; and she could not see that she had not done right. She said it was better for the children, who would be more certainly “provided for” than they could be by their father: and of course it was better for the father and herself. So she murdered her eight children before she was herself brought to the gallows.

There is a town in England which had, five years ago, a population somewhat under 100,000. It is a healthy and prosperous place, where the average age reached by the easy classes is as high as forty-seven years, and where the work-people are so far thriving as that they pay largely to the various objects of Friendly Societies. What would my readers suppose to be the mortality among children in such a place? Of a hundred children born, how many die in infancy?—Of the children of the gentry, 18 per cent. die in infancy. Of those of the working classes how many? 56 per cent. “What an enormous mortality!” everyone will exclaim. “What can be the reason! How does this mortality compare with that of other places?”

To ascertain this, we will take some district which shall be undeniably inferior to this town in probability of life. The rural parts of Dorsetshire—where the poverty of the labourers is actually proverbial—may be selected as the lowest we can propose. Yet the infants of Dorsetshire labourers have four times as good a chance of life as the children we have been speaking of. In that healthy and prosperous town the infant mortality was, five years since, fourfold that of the poorest

parts of Dorsetshire. The same thing was then true of Manchester. When wages were highest, and everybody was able to live comfortably, four times as many per cent. of the children who were born died in Manchester as in Dorsetshire.

Was there any peculiarity in the case of these short-lived families? any circumstance in their management which could account for the difference? What the impression was at the time we see by a presentment by the Liverpool grand jury, which mainly occasioned the next change in the law of Friendly Societies. What the grand jury said was this: “They could not separate without recording their unanimous opinion that the interference of the legislature is imperatively called for, to put a stop to the present system of money payments by burial-societies. From the cases brought before them at the present assizes, as well as from past experience, the grand jury have no doubt that the present system acts as a direct incentive to murder; and that many of their fellow beings are, year after year, hurried into eternity by those most closely united to them by the ties of nature and blood—if not of affection—for the sake of a few pounds, to which, by the rules of the societies, as at present constituted, the survivors are entitled. The continuance of such a state of things it is fearful to contemplate.”

The grand jury had an incitement, of course, to say what they did. The occasion was the trial which my readers may remember, for the murder of two boys, aged eight and four, for the sake of the payment from a burial-club; and the immediate sanction for their request was the alarm expressed by Lord Shaftesbury, supported by Baron Alderson's avowed belief that burial-clubs occasioned infant mortality on a large scale. How much concern had the healthy and prosperous town I have described with burial-clubs?

The population, we have seen, was under 100,000. On the “death-lists,” as the register of insurance was popularly called, there were the names of nearly 39,000 infants. It is clear that there must be some great mistake or fraud where it was pretended that 39-100ths of the inhabitants were infants insured in burial-clubs. We find some explanation in the plan pursued by a Manchester man of uncommon thrift. He entered his children in nineteen burial-clubs. By a comparison of numbers and registers, it was found to be a common practice for parents to subscribe to as many clubs for each child as they could afford. And not parents only. It was discovered that women who undertook the charge of workpeople's infants, were in the habit of insuring the children in burial-clubs; thus acquiring a direct interest in the death of their charge.

When these facts became known, through the inquiry caused by the Liverpool grand jury, and by a published letter by the well-known chaplain of the Preston House of Correction, the world naturally cried out that there must be a bad spirit of suspicion, of exaggeration, and of evil imagination in those who could say such things of English people. A Committee of the House of Commons inquired into the subject in 1854; and meantime the following facts were ascertained.

It was found, in the first place, that though the

law needed mending, it was already much better than the existing practice. By law, no insurance for money payable at death could be made on any child under six years of age. The principle of the law had been the plain one, that it was necessary to uphold all safeguards of the life of infants whose existence could not be made profitable. To make their death profitable while their lives were expensive, was to offer a premium on neglect, and even on murder. As such was the law, society supposed that all was right, till the Preston chaplain showed that it was useless—and how. The law was prospective, and nobody seems to have asked how many children were on the "death-lists" at the time of the passing of the Act (1847); and the members of the old clubs insisted on understanding that the new law affected only new clubs, and went on registering infants for burial as before. They quoted the opinion of counsel for this; and, when new clubs were to be formed, they framed them on the model of the old ones, without any regard to the law. So lately as the month of May, 1853, there was a club of 1500 members set up, into which infants were received just as if no impediment existed.

This was one fact. Another—perfectly astonishing to all but local visitors of the poor—was the way in which the illness or death of an infant was spoken of. It was a difficult affair to persuade the parents to send for the doctor. The answer was, in the ingenuousness of barbarism, that "the child was in two clubs." It would, in other words, be no harm if the child died, while it would be a pity to have to break into the money to pay the doctor, when it was of no use. Doctors themselves have been told, and so have rate and rent collectors, that the cottager cannot pay now, but will have money when such or such a child dies. It was the commonest thing in the world to hear the neighbours saying, what a fine thing it would be for the parents if their sick child died, as it was insured in three clubs, or two, or ten, as it might be.

On the trial of Rodda, who was hanged at York, some five or six years ago, for the murder of his infant, it was proved that he had said he did not care how soon the child died, as he should then have 50s. from the club; and that he added remarks to the effect that the death of another would bring in the same amount; and two more would each fetch 5l. Clergymen could tell how often the parents of a fallen daughter, or the fallen daughter herself, found comfort for the disgrace and burden of an illegitimate child in the thought of the compensation that its death would purchase from the burial-club.

Such were the facts which inquirers encountered, and which the Preston chaplain published, to bring the representation of the Liverpool grand jury into general notice, and obtain a reform of the law.

It was full time that something of the kind should be done. In one burial-club, the deaths of children between two months and five years old were no less than 62 per cent. of the whole. If any fact could be more directly to the point than that, it is that from 6 to 8 per cent. more children died who were in burial-clubs than in

the poorest class where no such insurance was made.

Full and clear as the evidence was, and remarkable as were two or three child-murders, in connection with burial-clubs about that time, many of us could not believe that such things could be done in England as Rodda was hanged for, and for which Honor Gibbons and Bridget Gerratz were sentenced to the same doom. But the prevalence of the feeling that they had done what was natural under the bribe offered for the child's life, and the certainty that the law would be altered, caused a commutation of the sentence on these women to one of transportation for life. From that moment society was pledged to amend the law: and the thing was done.

It was a fact not sufficiently made known, that the law of the land does not permit Life-insurance in the offices to which the middle and upper classes resort when the death of the person insured can be otherwise than unprofitable to the insurer. If I remember right, this restriction was suggested by the case of Miss Abercrombie, who was thoroughly understood to have been poisoned by her brother-in-law in 1830, after he had effected large insurances on her life. It seems strange that the same limitation should not have been extended to burial-clubs. What a rich man could not do in regard to his child, was done in the case of 39,000 children in a single town of less than 100,000 inhabitants: a circumstance which occasioned repeated comment in the Committee of 1854.

The inquiries of that Committee brought out some evidence of a very interesting character. Much of it has been lightly passed over because there was no proof of any considerable number of direct murders. But, as one judge observed, in his evidence, all orders of murder are rare in the experience of any one judge: as several witnesses observed, the undetected murders were likely to bear, in this case, a large proportion to the detected, while there was no provision for detecting them: as many more observed, the mortality arose from neglect and inaction, where murder was not to be imputed: and, as nearly all agreed, it was a perilous and pernicious practice to throw the inducements into the scale of a child's death, rather than its continued life. Hence the change in the law.

By the Friendly Societies Acts of 1855 and 1858, the amount obtainable from one or more Societies may not exceed 6l. for a child under five years of age, or 10l. for one between five and ten; and no money is to be paid without the production of a certificate of a duly qualified medical man, stating the probable cause of death, and also endorsing the amount paid upon such certificate.

It had been earnestly desired that the object of insurance should be the burial of the dead by the club, so as to preclude the passing of money into the hands of the parents or nurse. It was objected that this would break up existing clubs, and that it might interfere with a provident habit largely established. We shall all be better pleased when we see the provident habit based upon the life instead of the death of children; when we see insurance effected to procure them education,

apprenticeship, or settlement in life, rather than a funeral. Also, considering that the chances of living are already far less in the case of poor children than in that of the upper classes, one would rather not see such a sum as £1. made obtainable by the death of an infant. No doubt, the original intention was good—that the grief of losing the little one should not be aggravated by the difficulty of paying for its decent interment; but after the insight into the system obtained by the inquiries of 1854, every caution should be used in sanctioning money payments on the death of the helpless.

According to the latest Reports, there are 125 Burial Societies in the kingdom, comprehending about 200,000 members. Some Societies have 20,000, and some even 50,000 members each—the bulk of whom are children. The deaths last year were 5397; that is, an amount more than double the mortality of Friendly Societies generally, which is somewhat lower than that of society at large in this country.

The Registrar of Births, Marriages, and Deaths declares the mortality in burial-clubs in 1857 to be to the general mortality as 27 in the 1000 to 22. The high mortality among children is always assigned as an explanation; and this is, on the other hand, the ground of complaint about the payments of these clubs. Their members, who consider that they pay a high rate of insurance during the periods when there is least probability of death, are always surprised that their Society does not grow rich. It seems never to have any reserve. The explanation now offered is, that the same subscription is required for infants as for strong men; and, as a very large proportion of the infants die, the funeral money of adults is spent in laying the little ones in the ground, or in consoling the parents for their death.

Now, all this seems a disagreeable, unnatural, perilous way of going on. If we look at the obvious benefits of co-operation in the form of insurance, and consider the aims set forth by the Registrar of Friendly Societies, we shall see nothing that can recommend the insuring the lives of little children. The proper objects of Benefit Societies are agreed to be five, besides the expenses of management: viz. medical attendance; allowance in sickness up to the time when the pension begins; a pension at sixty years of age; a sum payable at death; and endowments.

The great and fatal mistake appears to be, the inversion of the purposes of these two last provisions. There are sound and strong reasons why a man, or a widowed mother, should insure his or her life. It may be a question whether a burial-club is the best place to put such savings in; but it is indisputably wise for those who have relatives dependent on them to secure the payment of a good sum of money on their removal by death. The only reason for such an insurance in the case of a child is, that the mere funeral expenses and family mourning may be paid; and every inducement to parents to make a profit of the loss of a child is a shocking and dangerous abuse. The child's proper place is under the last head—that of endowments.

These endowments are sums of money to be paid at a certain future time, for the benefit of

the person in whose name the insurer may subscribe.

For instance, a parent pays so much per month on behalf of an infant, in order to receive a considerable sum when the child is fourteen (in order perhaps to apprentice him); or when he reaches manhood—to settle him in business, we may suppose. Arrangements are made, under Government sanction, for such insurance; and by these it is settled that, in case of the child's death, the deposit is returned to the insurer; and, in case of the death of the insurer, the deposit, be it more or less, may be taken out, and applied for the benefit of the child.

If we could convert into endowments of this kind the money deposited in readiness to bury 150,000 children, a new prospect would open to the next generation of the working-classes. The difference would immediately appear in the returns of annual mortality. In towns and villages where the murder of infants may not be even thought of, it makes an immense difference in the chances of life whether infants are looked upon as likely to die or meant to live. They pine under that expectation of death as under the evil eye. It is truly a death-watch to them. Their chances when out at nurse are never the best; and they are slender indeed when, in addition to the trouble the little creatures give, they may each put several pounds into the nurse's pocket by going to sleep for good. All is changed when the money is laid up to put them to school—to bind them to a trade—to set them up in a business. Nobody thinks of their burial then. They are regarded as living, and likely to live; and hundreds and thousands of the children of England grow up, instead of dropping into an early grave. If the ghost of George III. were to come and tell us the truth about it, he would probably put it in his accustomed way: he would tell us that we might double our army, and fully man our navy, out of the difference, if we would turn over all infants from burial clubs to endowments under the Friendly Societies Act. Regarding them as civilians hereafter—or not looking beyond the immediate claims of every helpless infant for the fostering of its life—we ought all to direct our whole influence on the encouragement of the supposition that human beings are born to live. It is a disgrace to society when children die *en masse*. It is a sign that the laws of nature are somehow violated.

The best way of discouraging these infant burial-clubs is to keep the children alive and well.

Let everybody help, then, to get all infants properly vaccinated. Let public opinion discredit the hire of wet-nurses, which annually dooms large numbers of the children of wet-nurses. Let it appear that society expects and intends its infants to live and not die, and the terrific mortality which marks the site of burial-clubs will decline, and the clubs with it. The difference between them and the hopeful, cheery endowment insurance, is the difference between the tick of a death-watch in the stifling chamber in the dreary night, and the stir and chirp of nestlings in the wood, in the breeze and glow of the morning. If

the working-men of England saw the choice that lies before them, surely they could not hesitate between the life-fund and the death-fund for their children.

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

THE YOUNG LADY IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

HER HEALTH.

VISITORS from many foreign countries speak with hearty admiration, when they return home, of the young ladies of England; and especially of their bloom and gaiety, as the results of a healthy organisation. These admirers, whose impressions reach us by books, or in conversation when we in turn visit them, describe our young maidens as they see them—riding about the country,—possibly viewing the hunt from afar; or walking for hours in the lanes and under the hedgerows, while father or brothers are among the stubbles or the turnips in autumn: or gardening in spring, or attending scenes of rural sport,—perhaps even taking a share in the archery-meeting, as well as the flower-show. When the foreigner meets in town his fair rural acquaintance, he sees them with the glow of country air and exercise still upon them; and he adds his testimony to the many which declare that the young daughters of England are the fairest in the world.

This is probably true of a portion of the girlhood of our nation. The young ladies who are met in that London society which is seen by travelled foreigners who write books, and send forth their impressions in conversation, are, for

the most part, daughters of country gentlemen, or of the aristocracy. They are young ladies who live in a park in the autumn, and in Belgravia in the spring, and who have horses, and whatever else promotes health and pleasure. They are few in number, however, in comparison with the daughters of our graduated middle-class: and it may be a question whether foreign observers would give an equally favourable report of the health, spirit, and beauty of the daughters of our merchants and tradesmen, our physicians and surgeons, our lawyers, accountants, and manufacturers. Medical men, anxious parents, and observant moralists might indeed say, that, from one cause or another, one seldom sees a family of thoroughly healthy and cheerful young women of the middle-class, unless they are early married, or have to earn their living in some way, not in itself unhealthy. I am compelled to say, after a long life of observation of middle-class life in England, that I believe this allegation to be only too true.

How does it happen? What is the mode of life of girls of the middle-class?

Where girls have not full occupation and interest after the close of their school-life (which is crowded with interests of its own), they grow languid, indolent, irritable, or depressed; dissatisfied with themselves and everybody about them; morbid, in short, in mind and morals, as well as in physical condition. When, again, girls are seen in this morbid condition, the first thing that should occur to parents and physician is, that they may not have enough occupation and interest. Girls have the same need that other people have of a general exercise of the brain, in its physical, intellectual, and moral regions: yet it would seem, by our practice, that we think girls ought to thrive on a very small range of interests, and under the lowest degree of vital exercise.

Let us see how they live in their own homes in London. Let us take for observation the daughters of a silk manufacturer, or a sugar refiner, or a solicitor, or a surgeon. Let them be members of a household where there is neither wealth nor poverty. Let it be a genuine middle-class London household. What has the eldest daughter to do when her school-days are over?

If her mother and she are sensible women, she will vary her occupations, in the first place. The Ladies' Colleges in Harley Street and Bedford Square now afford an inestimable resource to women who desire to carry on their intellectual improvement beyond the ordinary school range. Every girl who comes home to her father's house intends to go on studying. The mother fits up some little room, or some corner of the dear child's bed-room, or says she shall have the dining-room to herself at certain hours, "for her own pursuits." But it seldom or never comes to anything. No man, woman, or child can go on long studying (as it is miscalled) without need, or special aim, and without companionship. There is less and less decision about the daily study: there are more and more interruptions; and, after some months, daughter and mother agree that, after all, "the duties of society" are more imperative than the obligation to study. Then begins the slipping away of the knowledge obtained at

school, and the lowering of the mind to the petty interests of the hour: and it is not long before the neglect of brain exercise and the absence of intellectual stimulus begin to tell upon the health. It is in cases like this, that the Ladies' Colleges are as great a blessing as they can be in training young women to be educators. The stimulus of companionship, the excellent teaching, the atmosphere of activity, the breadth of view laid open by the diversity of subjects, and the broad treatment of them by the professors, render study truly captivating to clever and thoughtful girls, and full of interest to any one who is in any degree worthy of the privilege. The study at home goes on vigorously when it is subsidiary to college-work. A kind-hearted parent will be well-pleased to afford his daughter such a pursuit. If he should be disposed to grudge the small expense, it might be well to remind him of the prudence of an expenditure which obviates doctors' fees, and those journeys for health which are rarely wanted by well-occupied young people.

Another profitable result from this college study will be the discovery of the bent of the girl's ability. If she has sufficient ability to do or learn some one thing better than others, she will find it out, and test the degree of the talent, under the searching influence of this second education: and whether she has to work for an independence, sooner or later, or to fill up her life by her own mental resources, it is of vast importance to have, thus early, the means of self-knowledge.

Very soon after the opening of these colleges, it was observed that they were doing good in rendering girls independent and courageous, and their parents rational, about the walking habits of the pupils. In six months' time, many who never before would leave home unattended, or cross a square alone, were daily walking considerable distances alone, to and from the college. The steady walk of women bound on some business, is usually a sufficient safeguard in London streets; and women of business seldom or never have anything to tell of adventures in London, any more than in a village street; while the timid young lady, apprehensive of she knows not what, if out in the broad noon of London, may naturally excite observation, and be insecure, because she supposes herself so. It is pleasant to think how many hundreds of girls have walked miles daily in all weathers, with great benefit to health, nerve, and independence, since these colleges were opened.

Among home-studies, that of music has assumed a foremost place, in London, within a few years. Early in the century, one might hear more or less strumming on the piano in most middle-class houses; but not often what was worthy the name of music. Now, it is said that in the evenings, after shop-closing, all along Whitechapel, Cheap-side, and the like, the back-parlours are little concert-rooms, where brothers and sisters play various instruments, or practise part-singing, as pupils of the great popular masters of the day, or members of the Sacred Harmonic, or other societies of a high order. Thus is a new and delightful interest introduced into citizen homes, to the great benefit of the daughters. The singing is good for the chest: but the ideas and emotions

created and exercised by the study of good music are more important still.

A different kind of occupation from any of these is, in my opinion, no less essential to health of body and mind. Domestic employments of the commonest kind have their own charms to most, and their special value to all women who are properly trained to them. The worst thing about girls' schools is, that they put out of sight for the time all housekeeping matters, and break the salutary habit of domestic employment. When a girl comes home to her father's house, she should begin at once upon this chapter of feminine study. When a child, she had probably been allowed and encouraged to help her mother in the store-room and kitchen, as well as with the household needlework. She had probably gone with her mother to the fishmonger's and the green-grocer's. If so, she has now only to brush up her old associations, and set to work at a more advanced point. If not, it is high time she was beginning to learn.

I wish the people of a higher and a lower class, and Americans and other foreigners, could be made to understand how much domestic business is actually transacted by middle-class women in England. I do not like the discredit of the popular notion, that our English girls are too genteel to understand how to cook, and to do shopping, and manage the house. Whether the business is properly done or not, women should insist on its being regarded as a duty, that there may be the better chance for its being done. If the daughter we are now contemplating is a rational girl, she will presently be in possession of the keybasket, and getting into training under her mother. She will be up early (thereby ensuring the early rising of the servants), and off to the fishmonger's, or the vegetable market,—having the benefit of an early choice of good things. She will have planned with her mother the dinners of the week (with a margin for unexpected occurrences); and therefore, when she has made breakfast, she is ready for her conference with the cook. She chooses to know how to do everything that she requires to be done; and, as far as may be, by experience. She experiments upon cakes and puddings; and the syllabubs, tarts, and preserves are of her making, till she is satisfied of her proficiency. The linen in the housemaid's department is under her care, and it will be her fault if a table-cloth has a jagged corner, or the sheets a slit in the middle. These matters, so far, occupy very little time, while they afford more or less of exercise and amusement to a healthy mind.

The sewing is another affair. It is still the curse of girlhood in too large a portion of the middle class. There can hardly be another woman in that class more thoroughly fond of the needle than myself: and few, probably, have done more needlework of all kinds in the course of their lives: yet it is my belief that thousands of parents are actually cruel to their daughters in requiring from them the amount of needlework customary in this and a few other countries.

Fathers and brothers suppose that the women of the household are to sit down to make linen for the house and its inhabitants, every day after breakfast, and to stick to the work all day,

as the men do to their business. If they knew the strain upon the nerves, and the general unhealthiness of the occupation, when a certain limit of hours is past, they would forbid it as peremptorily as intemperance in stimulating novels. I fear it is still too often the case, that all the girls of a family are seated at the work-table all day long, except when at meals, or when taking a walk; and that no one of them can attempt to steal half-an-hour's solitude in her own room without being sent for to join the sewing-party. There may be reading aloud; and this is a great improvement upon perpetual talk: but the need of solitude, and of freedom of occupation, is too often forgotten in households where needlework is assumed to be the whole employment, if not the whole duty of women. I could say much more under this head; but the advent of the sewing-machine supersedes much remonstrance and preaching. It will not happily take the needle out of women's hands, because there is much delicate and critical work which it cannot do: but it will soon put an end to the slavery to the needle under which so many English girls grow crooked, and sallow, and nervous, and miserable.

A few instances may go a long way in giving strangers an impression that our middle-class ladies do not condescend to domestic employments. I would fain hope that a few scattered cases have passed for more than they were worth, or I must think less well than I wish to do, of the cultivation of whole classes of my countrywomen. I once felt, and probably appeared, somewhat indignant, when a foreign clergyman crossed the room to ask me whether I could sew; and he was much surprised at a subsequent time, when we were better acquainted, to find that it would be considered insulting in this country to doubt any educated woman's being able to sew.

I wondered less when I saw, during a Nile voyage, the spectacle presented by a young English lady,—a daughter and sister of a clergyman,—to a considerable number of observers. She was accompanying her brother in his travels in search of health: and she was in intention a kind nurse and devoted companion; but she had had little or no training in feminine offices. She was aware of the deficiency; but she did not appear to regret it. She explained that her mother had vigilantly guarded her against every sort of communication with servants, and had prohibited all approach to the precincts of their department. (There was no doubt cause and effect in this method, as no mistress could have good servants who established such respect of persons in the household.) As there are no laundresses on the Nile boats, and the clothes of travellers are washed by the crew, in their primitive style, travellers must wear their linen rough-dried, unless female hands will iron them. My companions were a lady and two gentlemen. My lady friend and I took flat-irons with us; and during the ten weeks we were on the Nile, the gentlemen had collars and shirt-fronts, and we ladies had gowns and collars, as well starched and smoothed as they would have been at home, while all stockings were duly mended, and all damages repaired, with a very small sacrifice of time.

The invalid clergyman and his sister, meanwhile, looked as wofully out of order as any ducal family, bereft of servants, could appear: and servants are a mere nuisance on the Nile. *His* collars were rough and limp; *her* muslin dresses looked as if they had been wrung out of a washing-tub;—which was indeed the real state of the case. They tried to induce their dragoman to undertake the ironing,—a process which the Arabs conclude to be a sort of devilry,—or a charm against vermin. The obliging dragoman yielded to entreaty, and tried the experiment upon a pair of duck trousers, which looked particularly ill in a rough condition. At the very first touch, the operator took off a leg with his over-heated implement. He fled in a scared state, and could never be prevailed upon to try again. As the sister was acquainted with many of the parties on the river, and as she evidently did not envy us our power of “making things pleasant,” the effect of the incident would probably be, to lead strangers to suppose the young lady an example of English middle-class education, and the more housewifely ladies eccentric or low-bred.

The two main difficulties for young women in London seem to be, to get enough of bodily exercise, and to pass beyond a too narrow circle of sympathies. Some kind-hearted people, it is true, are for ever on their feet, going about doing good, as they think: but, in the first place, they are not usually young ladies who do this; and next, it is never prudent to recommend philanthropic pursuits as express business or resource. Philanthropy is apt to be mischievous unless it comes of itself;—that is, unless it arises out of natural circumstances; and it loses all its virtue when it is cultivated for the advantage of the dispenser of the good. While deprecating, on this account, the sending girls among the poor for exercise of body or mind,—as a sort of prescription for quickening the circulation, and stimulating the emotions,—we may yet bear in mind that all exercise is more salutary when it is means to an end than when it is taken as exercise. Daily governesses, if not overworked, derive more benefit from their walks than ladies who go out for constitutional exercise: and the excellent women who find it occur in their course of life to visit and aid the sick and unhappy, in prisons, workhouses, hospitals, reformatories, and in their wretched homes, certainly have fewer ailments, and more disposable daily strength, than women whose heads, hearts, and limbs are insufficiently employed. There is great difficulty in passing out of the small environment of personal acquaintance, and penetrating the life of any who live outside of it; and I would not deal out censure upon London families whose interests have been restricted within their own class, and even their own coterie; but, at the same time, we cannot but see in this, as in other cases, that “where there's a will there's a way.” Young ladies in London, who have no carriage to set them down at any point they wish to reach, and no footman at their heels, do get face to face with sufferers whom they can aid, and sinners whom they can retrieve. The truth seems to be, that it does not answer to go wandering forth, to find excitement for philanthropic, any more than other feelings:

but that persons of kind hearts, and the open sense which belongs to benevolence, are always meeting with opportunities of doing something for somebody,—even in London, where it often happens that one knows nothing whatever of one's neighbour on either hand.

One goodnatured and serious-minded girl will be deeply interested in a Sunday School, and be thence led to know several families who may be the better for her acquaintance; while another girl, amiable in her way, may be heard to say (as one actually did say, to the horror of a foreign philanthropist), "I am thinking whether I ever in my life spoke to a poor person." After all her thinking, she could not get beyond the washerwoman and the baker's boy. This is certainly not the sort of life which agrees with our conceptions of social duty and personal disinterestedness. It is not the sort of life which can ever fully exercise the moral faculties of any intelligent person: and if living in London really involved the necessity of young women growing up in this narrowness and hardness, it would be the greatest of misfortunes to live in London. We all know it to be otherwise, however: and where we meet with the most active and self-forgetting kindness we generally see the gleam of happiness in the eye, the glow of health on the cheek, and the cheerfulness and bloom of genuine vigour and enjoyment pervading the whole mind and countenance.

There remain the higher intellectual resources,—the study and practice of Art, for which London affords unequalled facilities; and the cultivation of literature, which is practicable everywhere. Intellectual privileges are at the command of all qualified to lay hold of them.

It appears, on the whole, that the main point in regard to health,—for persons who are well fed, clothed, and housed,—is having plenty to do:—in other words, having the brain well and equably exercised. Where we see a permanent condition of vigorous health, this must be the case. Where we see the too common spectacle of sickly girlhood, and of families of sisters growing sallow, feeble, depressed, and indolent, we may be very sure that, whatever else may be amiss, they are leading a self-corroding life, and need, above everything, imperative duties and interests which would call them out of themselves. If parents would but see what it is for any human being to have to invent something to do and care about, they would allow the utmost practicable liberty to their daughters to follow their own pursuits and adopt their own objects. It is not every father who can build a schoolroom for one daughter, and glaze a painting-room for another, and fit up a music-room for a third, and a conservatory for a fourth—like an old friend of mine: but every parent can so far respect the claims of his children as to consider their tastes, aid them in their objects, and abstain from confining them to petty interests and monotonous employments. It is the smallest consideration in the case, that the comfort and pleasure of his own home depend on the alternative he adopts.

In the country, it ought to be an unnatural circumstance, that young ladies are ever out of health. Besides the fresh air, and liberty and

sociability of rural life, there is such various, and abundant and charming employment for young people! Early hours, plentiful exercise, sunlight without stint, and an ocean of fresh air; food perpetually fresh from the kitchen garden, the farm-yard, and the river—here are conditions of health of very high value. The higher still seem to be no less plentifully afforded. In a country neighbourhood everybody knows everybody; and the calls for kindly action are incessant and perfectly natural. There are out-door pursuits for the whole year round, for girls of any spirit—the garden and green-house, the poultry-yard, the bees, and various branches of natural history, in which there is at present a demand for ability of every kind. Literature, again, and art are treasures within reach; and nowhere do they flourish more than in the bright atmosphere of rural life. Evenings of books are singularly charming after mornings of activity among the realities of the farm, the breezy common, the blossoming lanes, and the village school. Yet what do we actually see? Two contrasting cases rise up before my mind's eye, which so illustrate the whole matter, that I may simply relate them, and then stop.

I once saw how a family may lead a prison life, by choice, in a breezy, open, pleasant country. It was so long ago that, considering their state of health and their determination not to get better, they must all be dead long since. If not, it is no matter. As they never read anything, nor heard of anything readable, they would never encounter any report of themselves: and if they did, they would stick to their own scheme of life, and sneer at every other.

The head of the family was an opulent man, the heir of a large and lucrative rural business which kept him constantly in the open air, on land or water. He rode many miles every day except Sundays. I saw him only once; but I well remember his healthy, brown complexion, his active gait; and especially the wistful, tender, anxious gaze with which he looked on his three young daughters. The wife was fat and foolish, but with life enough in her to give her orders, and make tea, and hope her guests were comfortable. Further conversation she had none. The daughters were a lamentable group. They appeared to be between eighteen and four-and-twenty. All had the same complexion, which was lemon colour: and the substance was more like dough than muscle and skin. Their eyes were half dead; the lids drooping and the brows contracted, as by a perpetual headache. One had a crooked shoulder; another a lame knee; and the third an obstinate liver complaint. They seemed never to speak, except to their mother. It was impossible to get from them an answer to even a direct question. They looked too languid to move; yet when a stranger drew near to any one of them, she fled to the others—the three squeezing upon two chairs rather than separate to fetch another. Winking in the blaze of fire and candles, shivering unless they were in the direct heat of an enormous fire, eating rich cake with the care required by aching teeth—looking as if they had never enjoyed an unmixed pleasure in their lives—there and thus lived the daughters of that stalwart father. They

were in a spacious house, surrounded by a broad sunny garden: green-houses extended on the one hand and a paddock on the other. Across the road—a pretty winding road, checkered with hedgerow timber—spread a noble park; and outside the park was a gravelly, hillocky, thymy, furze-sprinkled common, where you might smell the sea-air when the wind was east. What were all these charms to the poor girls? Unhappily, there was nothing that they liked; so they did nothing but sit still and sew. All the week days of the year they sat in the same places, doing fancy work, when their plain work was done. The fires were hot; the table was rich; they came down to a late breakfast, and went up to bed after an early supper. If a neighbour came to call, they were rather disconcerted; for they felt uncomfortable at going on with their work, and yet could not prevail on themselves to put it down. They were driven to church on Sundays; and, of course, they caught cold there nearly every week. The most pitiable thing was their tone of mind, when it could be more or less ascertained. Its stupid exclusiveness, mixed with an ignorant shyness, was really like something new under the sun: but I suppose one may meet with it in some convents where the nuns are kept idle. "We never go out." "We don't like walking." "We don't know what is in the garden." "We never look into the green-house." "We know nothing about politics." "Papa reads the newspaper, but we never look at it." "We are not fond of books," and so on. Even about fancy work there was no getting on, so evident was their belief that nobody had patterns so good as theirs, and that nobody could work their patterns but themselves. Enough of them! for what could their lives be? They would certainly never marry. They were too far gone to change their habits. I doubt not they were carried to the churchyard, one after another, after a short and miserable life of disobedience to all the laws of health of body and mind.

In short and sharp contrast to this miserable group, let me disclose a much larger and happier one. No matter that it is on the other side of the Atlantic. It may be all the more instructive for that.

Some of my readers may remember hearing, above twenty years ago, of Angelina and Sarah Grimké, young Quaker ladies of South Carolina, and sisters of the learned Professor Grimké. The family were opulent; but the young sisters, troubled in conscience about slavery, freed their negroes and sacrificed at once their fortune and their native State; for they could not live in South Carolina without having or hiring slaves. They went northwards; and Angelina, after a time, married the well-known abolitionist, Theodore Weld. They have, for many years, dispensed an education of a very high quality indeed, to a long succession of girls; and, as it is a work of love, they go on with ever-growing skill and ease. Last summer a visitor spent a day in that country household, and what he saw was singularly impressive to him.

We hear much of the beauty of young American girls, and it is very true; but the beauty is sadly short-lived, because it is not based on physical

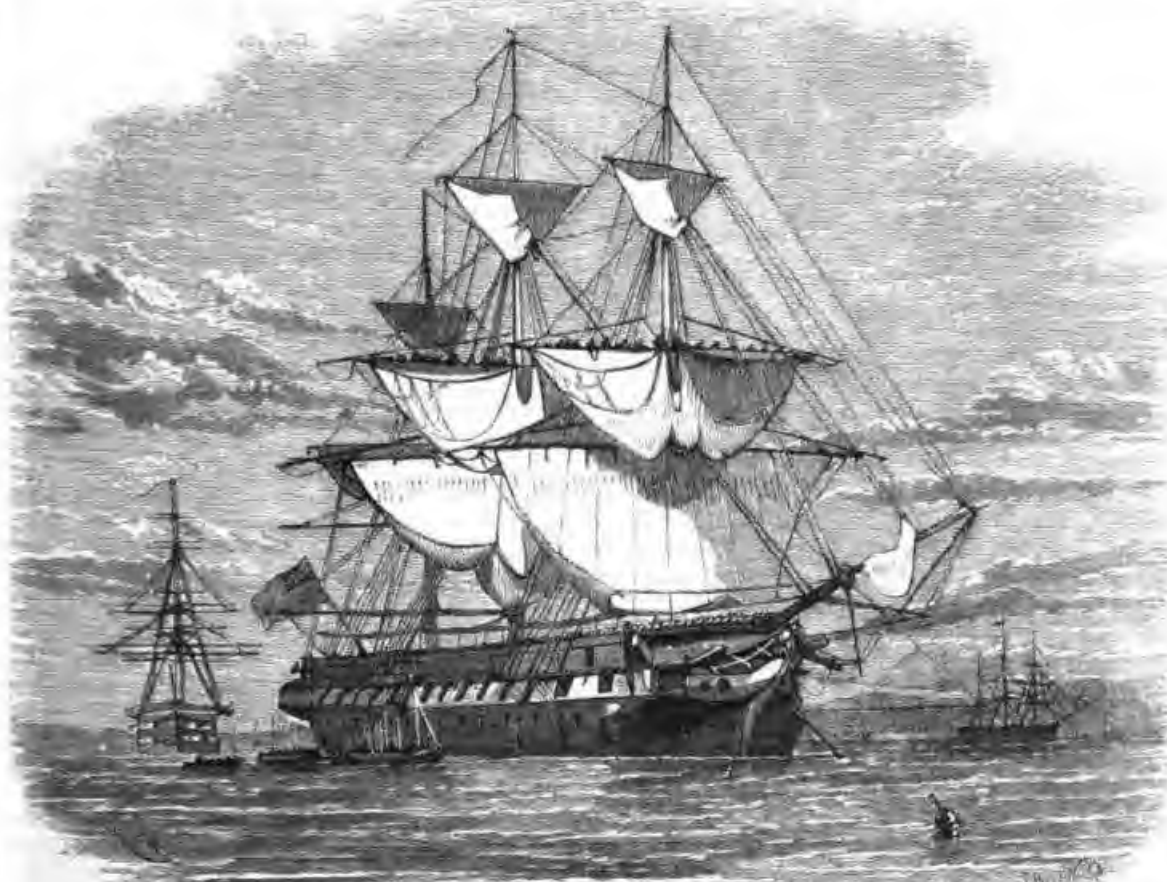
vigour. It is otherwise with the full-grown young women in the Welds' house, where the girls beg to stay as long as can possibly be allowed. As the ordinary mode of dress is neither healthy nor convenient, the girls wear a model dress, which is said to be graceful, and agreeable in colour, as well as commendable in other respects. It is made of a grey fabric, of the alpaca kind, trimmed with a suitable shade of red. It is a good deal like the Bloomer dress, with some improvements. When the guest saw the singular prevalence of ruddy health in the household, he was not surprised to find that the gardening was done mainly by the pupils. The ease and animation of the conversation struck him next, the topics being very solid and the spirit serious.

In the afternoon an excursion on the river was proposed. The girls were the rowers. They got out and prepared the boat, and pulled good strokes with ungloved hands. They managed the expedition as well as any boatmen could have done. While resting in a pretty spot, under the shade of the wooded bank, music was asked for. The girls sang glees and duets very charmingly,—with real excellence, the guest declares, both as to quality of voice and style. Now, this is like what many English parents want to see;—a country life at school, where the health may be established without the sacrifice of intellectual cultivation during the period of intellectual activity and tenacity.

If English parents wish this enough to demand it, they will obtain it. There is no natural reason why girls should not be trained to that robust womanhood which manifests itself by fitness for all occasions. In our age and country marriage is uncertain in the middle classes, and becoming rather less than more frequent. Every girl should be rendered "equal to either fortune" by the completeness of the development of her faculties. The world abounds in occupations and interests for all; and if we see a young woman declining in health and energy, and growing fretful or morose, or loquacious and trifling in her father's house, we may be sure that her parents have not duly provided for her health of body and mind. If she is yet recoverable, it will be by some stroke of what the world calls misfortune, by which her own capacities will be proved to herself, and she will find, perhaps in the middle term of life, what it is to live.

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

THE SCHOOL FRIGATE, THE AKBAR.



UP the Mersey, in the Sloyne, far above the Liverpool docks, there is moored off the Rock Ferry, a bluff old frigate bereft of guns, but with all its rigging standing. It forms a strong contrast to the trim and warlike aspect of the noble new ship, the Nile, which floats hard by in all the beautiful symmetry of its lines, and the dignity of its quiet strength.

What is its grim neighbour, the Akbar? It is clearly no longer destined to "brave the battle or the breeze." A quieter and yet a not inglorious destiny is hers. She is now destined to convert the denizens of our jails, and of the lanes and cellars of Liverpool, and train them for the sea. She is, of all our Reformatories, the most hopeful.

Having hailed a boat at the landing stages, we soon arrived alongside her starboard gangway. A cluster of boats, of all sizes, belonging to the ship, are moored there. We ask for, and at once receive admission from the young "look-out" man of the watch, and are speedily met and greeted with a hearty welcome from Captain Fenwick, R.N., the superintendent.

The entire ship is devoted to the training and accommodation of the lads, and the berths of the officers. These consist of Captain Fenwick, the chaplain, the boatswain, Mr. Perkins, and the schoolmaster and five men. There is also a carpenter, who has a large shop in the fore-castle. We

found about 130 lads, nearly all of them previously convicted criminals, the average number being 144. They are taught every department of elementary seamanship such as lads are capable of learning. These are chiefly furling and loosing the sails, reefing, making gaskets and sinnet, heaving the lead, drawing and knotting yarns, rowing, sailing, and carpentering. In addition to this they make all their own clothes. They have made, in last year, 976 pieces of clothing, 180 pairs of new shoes, and 276 pairs have been repaired; and have also made 18 sea-chests, besides 3 tons of oakum. The chief labour is that of rowing. They are freely entrusted with the boats, and row constantly, and they have to fetch all the water, a distance of two and a-half miles, daily.

This is real work, and tough work too. Exercise of thew and muscle is the very marrow of reformation. I believe that the actual good done by Reformatories is to be accurately tested by this single criterion. Bodily indolence and Paphian habits are the distinctive features of thieftom, and nine-tenths of these lads were not only thieves, but reared as thieves. They have never learnt the full use of any portion of their limbs but their fingers. It is ludicrous to see—especially when they first arrive at Reformatories—what girlish habits they have; and, in a great measure, the habits of effeminate girls. They give themselves up as about to die on slight illnesses; are wholly unable to

bear pain or endure physic, and wrap themselves up and shrink from the cold, for which they seem to have an extra hatred above the ordinary preference of the rest of Anglo-Saxon mankind for foul over fresh air. Their sensitiveness and jealousies are keen in proportion to their effeminacy. But so also are their sympathies and affections. Though his discipline is strict, it is upon these that Captain Fenwick relies as the fulcrum of all the other agencies of reformation. They give the lever its whole power. As a pleasing proof of this, Captain Fenwick being overdone lately with his work, had been absent for about three months to recruit, but returned scarcely recovered. The boys crowded round him, expressed the most intense delight at his return, and volunteered a promise that they would give him no trouble whatever if he would stay with them; and he says that the whole establishment kept their word and behaved unexceptionably.

The state of discipline appeared to be excellent. The chief offences to be coped with, are want of perseverance, recurrence to their own listless habits, and an intense love of chattering together on all occasions. Insubordination rarely shows itself, and is very easily put down by firmness without recourse to force. On one occasion seven new boys came in from another reformatory, and were soon after found in the fore-castle comfortably smoking their pipes, a forbidden luxury.

"Hollo!" shouts the boatswain, "what's the rig here? This won't do."

"What won't do? We are only a havin' a bit of a smoke."

"But I tell you that won't do here—so avast at that."

"We smoked where we come from, and we shall smoke here."

They all seven puffed on with increased vigour, with a dogged look, and *that* in their eyes which boded no good for discipline.

"Put those pipes down this moment."

The scowls and puffs continued unabated. The boatswain saw it was now or never. The result of the experiment would be no secret. The discipline of the ship was at stake. The boatswain is a strong, broad-chested, resolute man, not given to dally with emergencies. In one moment a well-aimed blow from his clenched fist tumbles the spokesman wrong side upwards, pipe and all, into the corner. The other six, at first taken aback, bristle up, waver, look fierce, think twice, and put down their pipes.

"Now, mind—no more smoking," and the boatswain left them to their own reflections on the discipline of the Akbar.

They gave little trouble in future.

It seems to be the habit of reformatories to pass their worst coin on one another. An overgrown "juvenile" was pointed out, who came with a high reputation for his pious propensities. He was obedient and of the devoutest demeanour, but was shortly afterwards found to be very immoral.

There was once a mere conversation touching mutiny. The matter was made known to the superintendent, who ordered the whole band likely

to have been at all affected, to appear before him, and addressed them nearly as follows:

"I hear you have been chatting about mutiny. It will perhaps be as well to think twice before you try it. It is quite true that we have no fire-arms or cutlasses on board, because we don't want them, or mean to use them: but the moment your mutiny begins, a signal from us brings a couple of gigs full of men-of-war's men from the Hastings, with their coxswains and cats, who will at once administer two dozen to each of you mutineers to begin with. Now, go back to work, like good lads, and let us hear no more of mutineering."

And no more was heard of it. The pattern-boy from — Reformatory has ceased to be dangerous; though he will never make a sailor.

Music is a great auxiliary to the system. A band has been formed, which plays famously on cornets à pistons, with drums, fifes, &c. They keep perfect time, and play with taste, and even with expression. This acquirement makes them very serviceable in the army, and is indeed forming one of the most expeditious modes of getting the pauper boys in the great District School near Croydon, into lucrative employment. Captain Fenwick has also taught his lads to chant, leading them with an harmonium; and few cathedrals need have been ashamed of their performance of Jubilate or the Magnificat. I was vastly struck by the quiet, decorous, yet earnest demeanour of the lads during the time they were thus engaged. I can readily believe in the effect which music, sacred and secular, must have on the hearts of these children, and how very powerfully it must open avenues to the access of those various kindly influences which Captain Fenwick addresses to their love and confidence.

An Irish boy whose general conduct was careless in the extreme, but who had never committed any great fault since his admittance, or (as far as could be ascertained) told a falsehood, fell suddenly from the maintop to the deck (about fifty feet), and smashed his lower jaw. Instead of crying out in pain, or for help, his first expression, in a voice hardly audible from pain and mutilation, was: "How thankful I am that *He* has spared my life, and I such a miserable sinner!"

The great advantages of floating reformatories are such as recommend them for general adoption. There is no means so good for thorough industrial discipline, both of a healthy and a useful kind, while the little floating island in which the community lives, powerfully enhances discipline. I wonder that others are not established in the Medway, at Milford, and in the Plymouth Waters, the Humber, &c. There are plenty of suitable hulks for the purpose. The boys, when fit, can be drafted into the Queen's ships only by special favour, but readily into the army and the merchant service. Some are now on board the Hastings, who were trained in the Akbar. Thus the great difficulty which stands at the further end of all reformatory treatment—how to provide for the reformed cases—has no existence in the Akbar.

The results of the system are thus stated. Since

the commencement, in 1856, when boys were first received, sixty-nine have been discharged: of these thirty-one are favourably reported; six are fairly reported: badly reported — relapsed into crime, one: left their ships without cause, seven; but it is stated that five were well and highly spoken of, and have gone to sea in other vessels; a desertion by no means in excess of those of apprentices in the merchant service: nineteen are not yet reported of. This is a fair and, no doubt, a true account, which is much more than can be said of some of the obviously inflated accounts put forth by some other reformatories. Nothing is more difficult than to test the reality of reclamation; but if a lad is fairly launched in life, and goes on steadily for a time, that is a great achievement. If he relapses afterwards, he does so just as any other human being may: and if one half, or even thirty per cent. of the lads benevolently aided, thus far repay the efforts of their benefactors, reformatories are among the most effectual of our public philanthropies.

I observed some aristocratic names among the inmates, such as Stanley, Cavendish, Ratcliffe, &c., and the countenances of many bespoke more than a dash of gentle blood.

The instruction is plain, and suitable to the future wants of the lads, and quite free from the excrescences which often grow on our National Schools.

A great part of the success of the system results from the admirable manner in which the lads are watched at night. Where this is not done, and where they are herded, bedded close to each other in dark rooms, without perfect surveillance, I believe that infinitely more corruption takes place at night than the whole day's discipline can counteract. The boys in the Akbar are formed into divisions—port and starboard watches—each of these again, is divided into sub-divisions; each of these has a first and second captain over it, selected from the leading names on the tablet of trustworthy boys; and these, together with the assistant purser's stewards, and the cook's mate, all are made to rank as petty officers.

These sub-divisions sleep as well as mess together, and form separate little companies, of whom the captain is the head; and he is responsible, to a certain extent, for the conduct of the boys under his charge. They all sleep together in their hammocks, in the cock-pit, which is well-lighted at night: and all night long, not only is there an officer always in command of the watch, but one of the boys parades up and down on each side of the long row of hammocks, having one hour watches, the whole night through. All talking is forbidden, and, what is more, effectually prevented.

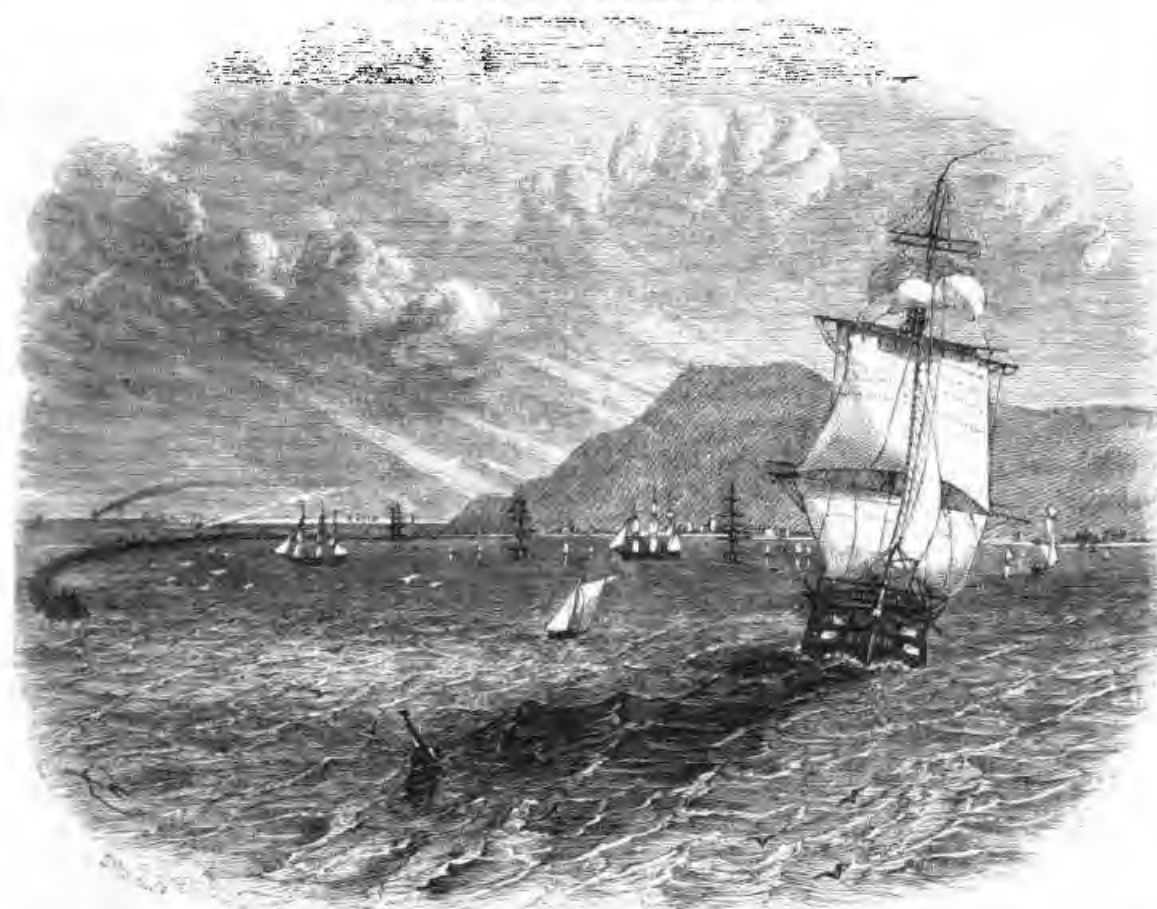
The expenses of the establishment are now more than defrayed by the grant of seven shillings per week from the Home Office, per head; the subscriptions and the produce of the boys' labour, leaving for last year a surplus of about 300*l*.

On leaving the ship, we were pulled to the Packet Station at Rock Ferry in gallant style by the boys in a handsome four-oared gig. If there

was a land reformatory for spade husbandry in the neighbourhood of such reformatories as the Akbar, it would effectually meet the need of all classes of criminal youths, and by thus cutting off the supply of crime in the bud, the good done would be incalculable. It is scarcely possible to overrate the importance of selecting a man of high moral tone, combining pluck and kindness of disposition for the work. Everything depends on the superintendent, for the tone of his personal influence, is everywhere *felt* throughout the community. No ephemeral amateur zeal, or mere paid service, can effect reformation. I had almost forgotten to say, that the diet must be good. I know cases where it is almost prison fare. On board the Akbar, they give four ounces of meat daily, one pint of soup, with plenty of biscuit, rice, or potatoes. I have small faith in economical philanthropies: the bodily labour required gives appetite, and not to supply it is to generate a low, physical condition, the sure forerunner of moral decline. We must look *forward* for reimbursement. The prevention of crime is worth a high price: it will be no permanent expense.

JELINGER C. SYMONS.

A HARBOUR OF REFUGE.



THE genius of England is universally admitted to be of an eminently enterprising and speculative character. No scheme, however daring, which can show a reasonable prospect of paying a good percentage for property invested, ever waits long either for money or men to bring it to a successful issue. This is especially the case in our marine commercial enterprise; English ships are everywhere, and English ship-owners always ready to encounter risk, difficulty, and danger in opening a new field for trade, or exploring the most distant countries in the hope of widening our already enormous foreign commerce.

As a consequence our vessels are countless, and the amount of wealth invested in them something incredibly large. For the protection of these great national interests from all preventable disaster, large sums of money are freely spent, both from the public and private purse. Grants are made annually, by parliament, for maintaining and improving our protective measures, and the increasing perfection of our hydrographic surveys, our naval charts, and our lighthouse and buoying arrangements, do much to prove the wisdom of a wise liberality in these matters.

It will be noticed that almost all of the efforts in this direction are the work of government; and it is right that this should be so, for great as is the marine wealth of the country, the English people are too just to desire that the heavy outlay involved by these works (an outlay without direct

appreciable return), should fall upon the ship-owner.

His first object must ever be to obtain a fair remuneration for his money and his enterprise, while it is clearly the duty of the people whom that enterprise benefits to afford it all the security possible. Nor has there generally been wanting, on the part of successive governments, a large liberality for the establishment of means of protection for shipping, though it is to a point which was for long years neglected that we propose to direct attention in this paper. It is comparatively very few years since the construction of harbours of refuge, greatly needed as they are upon our coast, has come under legislative consideration.

In the year 1843, the attention of the government was particularly directed to the subject, in consequence of a recommendation contained in the report of a select committee of the House of Commons, which had been appointed for the purpose of inquiring into "the shipwreck of British vessels and the preservation of lives of shipwrecked persons." Shortly afterwards, in April, 1844, a commission was formed to inquire into the most "eligible situation for constructing a harbour or harbours of refuge in the channel."

This seems late in the day for the claims of breakwaters to be first considered, but the expense and time required to accomplish these works must have had great influence in deferring their

execution to so late a period. The result of this second inquiry was that the commissioners recommended :—

First : That a harbour be constructed in Dover Bay, sheltering a certain area of roadstead.

Secondly : That a breakwater should be constructed in Seaford Roads.

Thirdly : That a breakwater should be constructed in Portland Bay.

The same report stated : "If only one work be undertaken at a time, we give the preference to Dover, next to Portland; and, thirdly, to Seaford."

The practical result of all this was, that the construction of Dover and Portland Harbours was decided upon, both of which are now in course of erection. It is to Portland, the least known, and by far the most picturesque of the two localities, that we propose, with the reader's kind permission, to conduct him; that if he be so minded, he may learn what time, pains, and money this country freely spends to add one new security to the seaman's uncertain life; and how in deeds of wood and iron, as well as in word and song, England loves her sailors.

The construction of this harbour having been decided upon, the first vote was granted by parliament in 1846, and by an act passed in May, 1847, powers were obtained for purchase of lands adjoining the proposed site, and the works commenced in the latter end of August, in the same year. The first stone was laid, in a deluge of rain, by H. R. H. Prince Albert, on the 25th of July, 1849, and in the early part of the following December, the operation of discharging stone upon the line of breakwater commenced in earnest. We are prepared therefore to find much work done, and the structure already partially performing its functions.

Let us become, in imagination, one of the crowd assembled on the little hill, called the "Nothe," on the south-side of Weymouth harbour, this bright September morning, and having gazed our fill at the Great Eastern lying huge and still in Portland Roads, let our eyes rest for a few minutes on the local peculiarities of the magnificent bay in which she rides at anchor, together with some half-dozen ships of-war and a crowd of smaller craft.

The grass-covered rocks under our feet run westward, dipping as they go, till at some three miles' distance they meet the long low line of the pebble-beach, over and beyond which we plainly see the glimmer of the distant channel; following the course of this most wonderful bank, as it stretches in a south-easterly direction, the eye rests at last on the rocky island of Portland, and reaching its farthestmost points, falls directly on the breakwater.

Roughly drawn, this is a sketch of the natural bay; and the coast line runs so far towards the south-east, that it wants but continuation in a north-easterly direction to cut off from the inclosed bay the breakers of a sou'-easter, and by completing the unfinished semicircle, to make the roadstead safe in all weathers. A glance at the map will show this in a moment, and give a clear idea of the extent and importance of the immense area

thus protected, where indeed a fleet might lie uncrowded, and where the huge Great Eastern, giant though she be, looks dwarfed in the distance. Some of us can learn from figures, and grow wise upon statistics: for such fortunate spirits, let the following table of sheltered anchorage, extracted from an official chart published by order of the House of Commons, be an indication of its magnitude.

Of 5 fathoms deep and upward	1,290	acres.
3	"	" 1,590 "
2	"	" 1,758 "
Up to low-water line	2,107	"

From our distant and elevated position we have endeavoured to get a general survey of the breakwater and its inclosed harbour: we will now proceed to take a more detailed view of the works themselves.

We take boat from Weymouth Quay, and twenty minutes' steaming brings us to the stony island. A veritable Arabia Petraea it is: we land among blocks of stone, some half-mile from our destination; we walk through lanes of piled stones, only to come upon other and similar lanes, till we emerge on the stony road leading to the breakwater. Every soul on board our boat seems bent on the same errand as ourselves: being well instructed beforehand, we do not follow the multitude in this case, but bravely face the hill which lies before us, and making up our minds for a stiffish climb, get first upon the table-land forming the chief habitable part of the island. Once there, we shall confess that our toil was not in vain, for from this Vern Hill, as it is called, is as lovely and strange a view as we ever remember to have seen. We are now opposite the Nothe on which we lately stood, but at a much greater elevation: at our feet lie the vessels,—liners, frigates, and the monster, swarming with dwarf life; big boats and little boats, steamers and sailing craft, all about and around her. To our left the narrow red line of pebble-beach, with the blue water smooth as a mill-pond on this side, and flecked everywhere on the other with the white foam of the restless waves, stretches away and away mile after mile till it is lost in the warm hazy distance: it is this beach which gives such peculiarity to the view; it is so singular, so unlike anything else, that none could see it for the first time and fail to be impressed with its strangeness and beauty. But there are other things besides the view on Vern Hill. We turn landward, and here are soldiers in abundance, cantonments, incipient fortifications, which even in their babyhood look Titanic; and last, not least, the well known Portland prison. Here we do not propose to go; the day is too bright, and the scene too inspiring, to make us wish for painful sights and associations; so we will be content with remarking that the convicts, numbering about fifteen hundred, are for the most part employed in procuring stone for the construction of the breakwater. The results of their labours we shall see more of by and bye; but we must clearly understand that, though thus employed, they have nothing to do *directly* with the works, but labouring within proper boundaries, and under strict supervision, they are separate from the ordinary workmen, and do but supply the raw material

from the quarries on the hill. Descending again, we turn our steps towards the works, passing on our way a massive breastwork, formed partially of granite and partially of the native stone. We learn that this is an experimental erection, and that in a few days her Majesty's ship *Blenheim*, now lying in the bay and bowling great round shot every five minutes along the water at a distant mark, will anchor broadside on, and give the breastwork an impartial peppering, with the view of testing the relative merits as to resisting power, and consequent adaptability for fortifications of the two materials. We believe that batteries will ultimately be built at the extremity of the breakwater, and that the stone of which these are constructed will depend very much on the result of this experiment. A little further on we come to the entrance of the works, and, writing our names in the visitors' book, are free to wander wheresoever we may choose. Before going further, it will perhaps be well to give a very rapid sketch of the principles and practice of building these sea-walls.

Three methods are commonly in use :—

1st. As at Plymouth. Rubble stone is flung into the water indiscriminately until it forms a bank rising above the high tide level; its sides take any angle they will, and the structure from low water to high water mark is finally levelled and faced with massive ashlar masonry.

2nd. As at Dover. A plain sea wall of great thickness is built (much after the manner of other walls) of large blocks of stone or concrete, laid both under and above water with the care and accuracy of well finished masonry.

3rd. As at Portland. Rubble stone is flung in, until the bank it forms rises to the level of the lowest tides; on this as a foundation a substantial wall of solid masonry is built.

It will be seen that the first method we have mentioned involves an almost incredible consumption of materials; the second takes less material but enormous labour and expense, from the amount of diving and submarine masonry; while the third using less material than the first, and less labour than the second, seems to hit the medium line of the greatest economy possible in these expensive works.

The first object, then, of the engineers here has been to construct this rubble bank; and with this view a temporary staging carried on piles into the water is erected in the following manner. A pile is loaded heavily and sunk into the blue waves, its lower end is shod with a large cast-iron screw, while its top is fitted with a cap, having long radiating arms of wood; the ends of these arms are notched to carry a strong rope coiled round them, one end of which passes to the shore; the arms thus form a kind of large skeleton reel, or drum, wound about with a rope, the loose end of which is then hauled upon by powerful machinery; and the pile steadied by guys, being thus made to revolve, slowly screws its way down into the solid earth, becoming firmer and firmer with each revolution. One row of piles is thus fixed, and another parallel row at thirty feet distance from the first is also screwed into the soil. Upon these, as a foundation, longitudinal timbers are laid, and on

the timbers a strong platform erected. We have thus progressed thirty feet into the sea, and the hauling machinery is now worked from the staging thus formed over the spot where the blue water gurgled uninvaded yesterday. Another row of piles at thirty feet distance from the last is now screwed in, and another thirty feet won from the water. Simply told, this is all that is requisite to carry out the wooden staging far into the sea; of the practical difficulties involved in the work we say nothing here; that they are often considerable will be easily inferred, when we remember the great depth of water in which many of these piles are screwed, and the immense weight and size of the piles themselves.

Strictly speaking there are now *two* separate breakwaters being constructed at Portland, the first running due east from the shore for about 1800 feet; and an outer or main breakwater, which is to be about 6000 feet long, separated from the first by an opening 400 feet in width and sweeping in a circular curve away to the north-east. The first of these, now nearly completed, is not only a sea wall but a landing and coaling stage for large vessels as well, while the outer or main breakwater is at present nothing more than a line of rubble stonework rising above the sea.

Throughout the whole of this length, or nearly 8000 feet, the temporary staging is carried, and its platforms laid with rails for the passage of the trucks of stone. Let us now look a little into the methods employed to procure the rubble and discharge it into the water. On the top of the hill, as already stated, the convicts are at work quarrying the stone. From its summit loaded trucks are constantly descending a series of inclined railways worked by a very familiar arrangement of drums, chains, and breaks, the loaded trucks in their descent hauling the empty carriages up again to the top of the inclines. Arrived at the level of the staging, we see them coupled to a small locomotive engine; and "puff, puff," away the "Prince of Wales" steams with some six or eight loaded waggons behind.

Leaving the shore, the little engine stands boldly out to sea, supported on the platform and its rails, and rattles by us at a good speed over the creaking and shivering timbers. It is a great sight this, and not without some nervous accompaniments. The deep water is dashing against the piles nearly thirty feet beneath us, yet the "Prince" bowls along over the apparently perilous pathway as merrily as ever Great Western locomotive thundered into Paddington station, its driver and stoker looking as unconcerned as if the waves below them were solid steady earth. Perhaps while still feeling a little doubtful of this new kind of railway travelling the train stops near you, and, without a moment's warning, without even the sounding of a whistle, you are unmistakably frightened by a "crash, bang, boom!" as if train, engines, and men had gone together to the bottom. For an instant all sight of them is lost in an ascending column of white water, till as this slowly sinks you again catch sight of the "Prince" quiet amid the din, and then there comes another crash and another column of spray shot high into the air—but this time we are not alarmed; the

trucks we discover are only discharging their stone. By a simple mechanical contrivance the waggon drops its whole load bodily into the sea, and it was to this falling mass of rubble, some eight or ten tons in all, that the commotion was due.

Train after train of trucks runs by us on this errand, and everywhere is the crash of the falling masses of stone. All day long the work goes on, undeterred by weather or season, neither gales nor heavy seas producing much influence on its certainty and speed. Walking, as it were, by faith in science and skill, the locomotive steams along the platform, while the wind is howling through the timber work, and the sea is breaking vainly on the piling. Two thousand tons of material a day is thus cast into the water; for nearly ten years this has been going on, and the sea is not yet wholly conquered. The construction of the inner and shorter breakwater, being, as we have said, not only a sea wall, but a landing-stage as well, claims some attention. This part of the work is all but completed, and presents a magnificent specimen of masonry. The rubble foundation has been brought up to the lowest spring tide water-mark. Here it has been levelled, and upon it erected the wall proper, about twenty-five feet high and eleven feet thick; on its summit is a pathway about thirteen feet wide; the wall is strengthened by buttresses nine feet deep and ten feet wide, occurring at every twenty feet of its length on the inner side, while its seaward face is built of huge blocks, beautifully put together; the hardest granite being used up to high-water line, and the Portland stone completing the whole. This seaward face is nearly perpendicular, having a "batter" or slope of one inch in every foot. It must however be remembered, that the rubble foundation, previously described as reaching low-water level, is here heaped up higher along the wall, and naturally forms an embankment of rough stone, sloping gently to the bottom. This embankment, or "apron," is of advantage in lessening the force of water upon the wall itself. The structure is terminated by a circular "head" of masonry. The foundation of these heads is laid about twenty-five feet deep at low water of spring tides, and here the duties of the mason were allied to those of the diver. Every stone was carefully marked and fitted before being placed under water; and the divers, duly equipped, did their day's work some fifty-feet below the surface. More beautiful or successful specimens of the mason's craft than these "heads" it is difficult to conceive. On the inner side of the sea wall are the landing quays before alluded to. Rising out of deep water, they permit the largest craft to range easily alongside, and are, we believe, chiefly destined to serve as coal wharves for ships of war lying in the roads. Already we see considerable quantities of coal stowed along them; and there will ultimately be erected a staging and line of railway, with the proper discharging apparatus for this service.

Standing upon this quay, we will pause for a moment to enjoy the deep blueness of the water. How clear it is! and how plainly we see the great

brown whiting lazily grazing among the weeds. Two youngsters from the works are taking advantage of the dinner hour to lie along the quay walls and try their luck with a primitive line and hook; but the whiting show an evident desire to avoid their delicate attentions. We watch them amused for a while, till one of them shouts, excitedly, "Bill, here be the bait!" Bill is all eyes in a moment; and we share their pleasure, as we see shoal after shoal of the small fry the local fishermen call "bait" swimming slowly by. When the bait is about, the mackerel are most likely near. Myriads of the little fish cover the water; thicker and thicker they glide past. Our little friend grows madder and madder, and flings out his barbarous line farther into the blue water, in the vain hope of taking some idiotic mackerel fonder of pork than safety. Still the bait swims on unmolested, when we become aware of a curious kind of excitement among them; growing and spreading, in an instant it has become a panic, and the gliding shoal darts wildly through and even out of the water, as a hundred glittering streaks of green and silver flash among them out of the deep sea. For one moment the beautiful destroyers gleam bright upon the surface, then sink again below. The bait, slowly resuming their tranquillity, swim quietly by again; but the spectacle is not without its excitement; none but those who have seen it can imagine the fierce, swift rush with which a mackerel shoal rising for food flashes past, and it is with quickened interest we wait the return of the fish, and a renewal of the slaughter. They come again and again, while all the time the great brown whiting graze as unconcerned as if there were no such thing in the watery world as pain, terror, and death.

We must not let this scene, however, detain us too long, but stroll leisurely on to the extreme end of the breakwater. It is a long walk, but a pleasant. The cliffs of Portland open as we proceed, and the view becomes more extensive and beautiful: the white sails of passing yachts, the wheeling gulls, the breezy air—all combine to make a picture pleasant to see and to remember. On the farthest finished point we come upon a portable light apparatus for the warning of vessels, which is carried forward with every additional increase in the length of the structure. The lamp is fed with gas in a somewhat novel way. A small gas holder furnished with wheels, and running like a truck upon the rails, is attached by flexible tubing to the light. This holder goes periodically backwards and forwards to be filled; and it is a curious sight to see the locomotive dragging a gas-holder shorewards for its feed of gas.

Returning to the land, we must visit, before we leave Portland, some of the principal shops and buildings connected with the works. Chief among these in interest are the cement-mills, the fitting and engine-shops, and the pickling-house. We have heard much, during our visit, of the extraordinary tenacity of the cements used in putting the masons' work together, and have seen a specimen of stone broken before the cement would yield;

and we now find ourselves in the workshop where this cement is prepared. Here are the mills: revolving pans of iron with heavy rollers running in them and crushing their contents to powder; these pans are fed from a kiln hard by, in which is burned the blue lias forming the chief ingredient of the cement; outside the building is a heap of a reddish brown and sandy-looking material; this is pozzuolani,—most probably a total stranger to the reader. Pozzuolani is a volcanic product which we may roughly describe as ashes, and having several properties which render it extremely useful for cement. "It is an ill wind that blows no one any good," we know; still it does seem somewhat strange that the scorching lavas of the terrible volcano should be turned to so far from fiery an account, or that Vesuvius' embers should be finally quenched in the salt-water lapping the sides of an English break-water.

Turning our steps to the engine and fitting-shops, we come suddenly into the presence of a steam-hammer in full work, standing in the centre of a large building crowded with machinery, and at this moment driving the star-like sparks of burning metal, meteor-like, about the place. The hammer is smashing away against a great cube of white hot metal; now striking blows such as Thor might envy, and again patting the obedient and malleable metal with patronising gentleness; but ever insisting on submission to its will, and getting it by hard blows where gentle persuasion fails.

But we must not linger here: there is too much of a revolutionary spirit about a shop of this kind to make it pleasant to a visitor. Surrounded on all sides by whirling pulleys and flying straps, we seem to be imprisoned in a whizzing world, where nothing stable satisfies the senses; our eyes seeking vainly for some spot endowed with the blessing of stillness, and our heads in a short time feeling as if about to catch the infection of motion and to take to whirling on their own account; so we go out again just as the modern steam Thor comes down with another thundering blow on a new mass of metal, and make our retreat amid a shower of blazing sparks.

At a few paces' distance we find the pile pickling-house mentioned above; "still life" this, happily, but evil smelling enough. A large wood yard terminates at one end in a shed of considerable length; in this shed we see something which strikes us as being perhaps the largest steam-boiler in the world; one end is covered by a door, fastened on with such an array of screws that we speculate on the possibility of having discovered the "strong box" of the establishment. It is indeed a "strong box," though it only holds timber. All the piles used on the works, before being submerged, are impregnated with creosote for the purpose of preserving the wood from decay, and the process is effected in the cylinder before us; this is about six feet in diameter, and some ninety feet long, lying lengthways along the ground. Running up to its mouth is a little line of railway, which, on the removal of the door is continued, we see, into the cylinder; on this railway traversing the whole

length of the yard are several small trucks; two of these are at this moment loaded with long piles which are thus conveyed into the yawning cavern; the door is swung to, and bolt after bolt securely screwed up. When everything is made fast, pumps, communicating with the boiler and drawing their supplies from reservoirs of creosote beneath the flooring of the shed, begin to pour in streams of the preservative fluid; the cylinder is soon filled, and the continued pumping drives more and more creosote into it; gradually the force of the liquid increases, and the piles begin to be permeated by it, the pumps straining at the work until an enormous pressure on every square inch is obtained.

The wood lies in its penetrating bath until its fibres are completely saturated; when, the creosote being once more restored to its subterranean dwelling, the door is opened and the pile which went in white and spotless pine, comes forth a blackened monster safe from rot—whether wet or dry; preserved indeed, but—smelling! bah!—let us get into pure air again to soothe the feelings of our offended nostrils.

The sun is going down into a still sea, the breeze has fallen, and the quiet of evening is creeping over the bay; we take a long look at the Great Eastern, and her last departing batch of visitors, and with a glance at the black ships-of-war, the stately Edgar and Blenheim, and the beautiful frigates. We wander towards the pier, *en route* for Weymouth, but discover that we have missed our last boat; however, we are not much disturbed at our ill-fortune, for we have not walked so far, but that a stroll home past the beach, which with its picturesque singularity has so delighted us, may not be uninteresting. It is but four or five miles, and as we saunter along, we watch the gray evening mists stealing sea and ship from our sight; the heights of Portland are slowly lost in haze ere the star's faint lustre glints on the darkened water; soon kindred stars shine out everywhere; ship after ship hangs out her bright token of life, and as we turn the point of the last hill on our homeward route, the Bay of Weymouth lies at our feet, a net-work of fairy-like illumination.

Lights glitter everywhere, from the planet-like harbour signals, to the lamps of the promenade, with their long quivering reflections. Once more at home we recall the pleasures of our trip, and filled with admiration of the mighty results which man's skill and perseverance can attain, we determine soon to look a little into the history and structure of that grander breakwater of nature's building,—the pebble-beach. We shall probably find no acts of parliament, no royal commissions, and no foundation ceremonials connected with its story; perhaps, however, with patience, much of interest may be learnt concerning it. May we hope for the reader's future companionship in our proposed "Run on the Chesil Bank?"* D. P.

* The almost tropical severity of the gales of last October (which occurred since this article has been in type) is too exceptional seriously to modify any remark made above. The staging, however, which is represented as being proof against heavy seas, has, we believe, suffered some damage in the recent tempestuous weather, though this is slight in comparison with what might have been expected from the effects of one of the fiercest storms ever experienced on our shores.

THE FOLK-LORE OF A COUNTRY PARISH.

OUR country parish is quite a stronghold for superstitions, and most certainly does its best to preserve "the fast-fading relics of the old mythologies." It will not by any means get rid of its folk-lore fancies, but nourishes them with a tenderness that would be surprising to your fine men of the world and your sceptical dwellers in cities, who pooh-pooh our little idealities, and delight to amuse themselves with our marvels and mysteries. Let them do so, say I! It but little affects our parish, which goes on its way much as it did some scores of years ago—save that we have done with our witches, and no longer oblige our elderly females to sink or swim in the parish duck-pond.

But our country parish believes in many things that are not admitted into the creeds of the more enlightened towns. Permit me to divulge a few of the superstitious fancies that still abide with us: and believe me when I tell you that my tales are strictly true ones, and that their facts came within my own cognisance.

And first—which is beginning pretty nearly at the beginning—as to a baptismal superstition. It is not often that our parish church can produce more than one baptism at a time; but, the other Sunday afternoon, there was the unusual number of three christenings—two boys and a girl. The parents of one boy were in a very respectable class of life: the parents of the two other children were in humble circumstances. The parties at the font had been duly placed by the officiating clergyman (Mr. Milkinsop, our esteemed curate); and, as it happened, the girl and her sponsors were placed last in order.

When the first child—who was the boy of the poor parents—was about to be baptised, the woman who carried the little girl elbowed her way up to Mr. Milkinsop, in order that the child she carried might be the first to be baptised. To do this she had (very contrary to the usual custom of the poor, who—in all essential points at least—are generally as refined as their superiors) rudely to push past "her betters"—i.e., the sponsors of the second boy. As she did so, she whispered to one of the sponsors, by way of apology:—

"It's a girl, so it *must* be christened first!"

And christened first it was. But the peculiar manner in which this was brought about, showed that the woman was influenced by some peculiar feeling; and, on the next day, an opportunity was taken to discover her motive.

This was her explanation.

"You see, sir, the parson baint a married man, and consequentially is disfamilar with children, or he'd never a put the little girl to be christen'd after the little boys. And, though it sadley fluster'd me, sir, to put myself afore my betters in the way which I was fossed to do, yet, sir, it was a doing of a kindness to them two little boys in me a setting of my little girl afore 'em."

"Why so?" it was asked.

"Well, sir! I *har* astonished as you don't know," was the reply of this specimen of our country parish. "Why, sir, if them little boys

had been christen'd afore the little girl, *they'd* have had *her* soft chin, and *she'd* have had *their* hairy beards—the poor little innocent! But, thank goodness! I've kep' her from that misfortin'!"

And the woman really believed that she had done so; and, moreover, the generality of her neighbours shared her belief.

So let this fragment of folk-lore from our country parish prove a warning to clergymen—more especially to bachelors like Mr. Milkinsop—who would desire to stand well in the opinions of their poorer neighbours.

If twins are born in our country parish, it is believed that of the little bipeds—like the quadrupedal martin-heifers and free-martins—only one will prove the father (or mother) of a family.

If any of our women are seen abroad, and pursuing their ordinary out-of-door occupations, before they have been "churched," they at once lose caste in the eyes of their neighbours.

On the subject of marriage we have also our little peculiarities. Not a maiden in our parish will attend church on the three Sundays on which her banns are proclaimed. And this, not from bashfulness or mock-modesty; but because they deem such a proceeding to be eminently unlucky. When Mr. Milkinsop once asked one of these damsels what was the particular kind of ill-luck that she expected would have resulted from her attendance at church on those three particular Sundays, she informed the reverend gentleman that the offspring of such marriages would be born *deaf and dumb*. And, to clench this statement, and prove its truth by a forcible example, she adduced the instance of a young woman of her acquaintance who would persist in going to church to hear her banns "asked out," and whose *six* children were in consequence all born deaf and dumb. No wonder, then, that our village maidens stay away from church on those three interesting Sundays, when such sad results are known to follow a deviation from our country parish superstition.

Why or wherefore, when these young damsels present themselves before Mr. Milkinsop to be united in the bonds of wedlock to the husbands of their choice, they should carry a sprig of gorse as a bridal bouquet is a mystery which I have been unable to solve. A young lady fresh from school, and therefore well versed in the mystical language of flowers, informs me that gorse is an emblem of "enduring affection." I am also aware of the old adage (for do we not use it in our country parish, where the glorious gorse grows in such large tracts that, when covered with its golden bloom, it might induce a second Linnaeus to throw himself upon his knees and kiss the earth for producing flowers so beautiful)—I am aware, I say, of the old adage that says, "When the gorse is out of blossom, kissing is out of fashion;" by which is meant that kissing is popular all the year round. But, still, I confess that this adage and that emblem do not, as I believe, account for the appearance of the sprig of gorse in the bridal bouquet, and that some further meaning lurks behind, which the damsels are unwilling should be brought to prominent notice. I therefore am

constrained to leave this popular custom where I found it.

The fine old church of our country parish has a pretty peal of bells, whose silvery tongues melodiously proclaim to the neighbourhood the various joyful events that break into pleasant ripples the still surface of our usual humdrum existence. The daughter of our chief farmer was married the other day, and, of course, the bells did their best to spread the tidings. The ringers rang when the bride and bridegroom left the church; and the ringers rang when the happy couple drove out of the parish in a chaise and pair for a honeymoon of four days in the great whirling world of London. And the ringers rang at divers times throughout the day, being filled with beer and friendly feeling. And, late in the evening, when the last peal had been rung, the ringers (according to the custom of our country parish) fore-told upon the great bell the number of children with which the marriage was to be blessed. This tintinnabular prophecy as to the "hostages to fortune" probably depends—like the gipsy predictions in similar cases—upon the largesse expected to be forthcoming. On this particular occasion, the clapper was made to smite the bell thrice three times. The bride and bridegroom, therefore, know the worst, and can betimes make the needful preparations for the advent of their tuneful nine.

All the young ladies in our country parish, in common with the young lady whom I have just mentioned, are imbued with the same superstitious spirit as their poorer neighbours. That leap-year empowers a young lady to "pop the question" to a young gentleman, is, I believe, a generally received fragment of folk-lore. But, it is the belief of young ladies in our country parish, that leap-year permits them to do something more. I am informed by one of my fair young friends in that romantic village, that if, in any leap-year, she should so far forget herself as to suggest an union between herself and a bachelor acquaintance, who should be uncivil enough to decline her polite proposals, she could, thereupon, demand from him the gift of a new silk dress: but that, to claim this dress with propriety, she must, at the time of asking, be the wearer of a scarlet petticoat; which, or the lower portion of which, she must forthwith exhibit to the gentleman; who thereupon, by the law of leap-year—which is as the law of the Medes and Persians—is compelled to present to the lady a new silk dress, to cover her scarlet petticoat, and assuage her displeasure at his rejection of her proposals.

When my fair young friend told me this bit of feminine folk-lore, I laid it to heart, thinking that it might prove exceedingly useful to me, in putting me on my guard during the forthcoming leap-year. For, I thought within myself, that it was not without a determined significance, that this young lady, and others in our country parish, had followed the then prevailing fashions (received by us a full twelvemonth after they have been introduced in more civilised places), and had habited themselves in bright scarlet petticoats—which, on a snowy day, and from beneath a looped-up dress, and over a pair of good, sensible legs, shod with good, sensible boots,—made, I can assure you, a

great figure in the landscape, and, gleaming warm and sunny, presented to the eye that positive bit of colour which is so valuable to the artist. And I thought it might be reasonably inferred, that the ladies' law of leap-year was about to be inflicted upon the gentlemen of our country parish and its vicinity, in its most expensive silk-dress form, and that the assumption of these scarlet petticoats was merely the initiatory step to a sterner process.

And hence I thought that—from a careful consideration of the various dangers arising from this feminine folk-lore that would beset me, and all the other bachelors in our country parish, during the next twelvemonth,—I should be inclined to coincide with Mr. Meagles' opinion of beadles,* and to consider his advice with regard to those bipeds as worthy of all imitation; and so, when leap-year came, and when I caught sight of a young lady tripping along the road "in full fig," and displaying a scarlet petticoat, I should consider that I showed the best discretion by turning and running away.

We are great on the subject of the weather in our country parish. In particular are we attached to prognostications of rain. If the salt is damp, we say that we shall soon have wet. If we see a snake gliding and wriggling across the road, we say "there will be rain before long." If we see the glow-worms shining at night, we say, "we shall have wet ere morning." If we hear the woodpeckers utter their peculiar, harsh cry, we say, "we shall have a shower soon." We find our barometers in all these things, and many more; and, for us, the moon "takes up her wondrous tale" chiefly to tell us what sort of weather it will be. We say that "it will be a wet month, when there are two full moons in it." Intending to burst into immortal verse, but failing at the threshold in our search after a rhyme, we say,

A Saturday's change, and a Sunday's full,
Once in seven years is once too soon.

But we are more successful in our rhymes, when we treat of the gardening operations for spring. Then we say,

When elm-leaves are as big as a shilling,
Plant kidney-beans, if to plant 'em you're willing;
When elm-leaves are as big as a penny,
You must plant kidney-beans, if you mean to have any.

The energy infused into the last line, and the clearness of the advice contained in it, is a sufficient apology for its lengthened metre. In whatever quarter the wind may be on Candlemas-eve, our people say that it will "mainly" remain in that quarter for forty days. Concerning the unhealthiness of the spring season, we say,

March, search; April, try;
May will prove if you live or die.

In regard to the approach of spring, we are not to be deceived. For we have a pretty saying, that the gentle season has not come in its "ethereal mildness," until we can plant our foot on twelve daisies. And when it is come, if you should chance to take violets or primroses into

* See "Little Dorrit."

any of the houses in our country parish, I would warn you to be mindful to take not less than a handful of their blossoms; for, less than this would bring certain destruction to the farmer's broods of young ducks and chickens.

Our fine old church keeps up the custom that was prevalent in the days of good George Herbert, and "at great festivals is strewed and stuck with boughs," like as was the church of "the country parson," or that of Mr. *Spectator*, where "the middle aisle was a very pretty shady walk, and the pews looked like so many arbours on each side of it." At Christmas it is decorated with holly and ivy; and mistletoe would be alily added, if Mr. Milkinsop were not preternaturally vigilant. On Good Friday it is dressed with solemn yew; and this, on Easter Day, gives place to fresh boughs and primroses, and such spring flowers as may then have bloomed. Then, on Palm Sunday, we have palm-branches—that is, the nearest imitation thereto, in the shape of willow wands with their catkins and fluffy blanket-looking buds. And, on Whit-Sunday, we are brave with boughs and flowers.

There is no modern innovation in all this. The custom has been handed down to us from antiquity, and we take it as we found it. If any should class it among the "superstitions" of our country parish, surely it is a very simple and innocent one; it is one, at any rate, with which our people would not willingly part; and one which they recognise with pleasure (not abusing it), while they bear in mind the sentence, "O all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord; praise Him, and magnify Him for ever."

When any one dies in our country parish, the passing-bell is tolled. If you listen to its solemn tongue, you may know the sex of the departed. Three times three for a woman; three times two for a man. As the last toll dies away in faint vibrations, the labourer out in the fields who hears it, bares his head, and says, "God give him a good God-speed." This word "God-speed" is one of our country parish sayings. It means "the leaving one's house in order to remove to a new home;" and they use it when they change from one dwelling-place to another.

It is not the custom to toll the passing-bell for a child that dies unbaptised. Was there more of love, or superstition, in that young mother's heart, who came to the parson of our country parish, beseeching him with earnest pleadings that the passing-bell might be tolled for her dead and unbaptised little one, and so give rest to its soul? For she fancied that until the church-bell had tolled, her child's soul would be caged in unquiet rest in its dead body.

When a funeral approaches the church of our country parish, the solemn tolling is ceased, and a peal is rung. It has a melancholy sweetness that is very touching.

As a matter of course, the old superstition about the north side of the churchyard being under the dominion of evil spirits, has full sway in our country parish; and not a funeral ever takes place in that portion of our "God's acre," or has been known to take place within the memory of our oldest inhabitant. I must except,

though, that story that he loves to tell, of having passed the churchyard in the dead of the night, once in the days of his youth, when he and poaching were more intimate than they ought to have been,—and being attracted by a light on the ghostly side of the churchyard,—and being overcome first by fear, and then by curiosity,—and then quietly stealing to the spot, and beholding by the flickering light of a lantern, a coffinless body being committed to the ground by two men,—and how he recognised them, and knew that the corpse was that of a woman who had been ruined and deserted, and in her despair had destroyed herself by poison. But this is an exceptional case; and the north side of our churchyard is, as yet, free from grassy mounds and hoary headstones.

Yet does this remind me of another funeral of which the same person has told me. Our country parish is a favourite resort of the gipsies. There is plenty of grass in the green lanes for camping purposes; and the brooks are very convenient. Our hedges suffer from the intrusion; but, our hen-roosts and more valuable articles are safe; for our gipsies are grateful; and, after their own peculiar code of honour, thieves from our neighbours instead of from us. When a child is born to them, they bring it to Mr. Milkinsop to be baptised; and they themselves often come to church, and dazzle the eyes of our rustics, with handkerchiefs and waistcoats as gaily coloured as the stained-glass figures in the East window. In fact, a distant likeness might be traced between the two. Perhaps, the old parish-clerk may have reasoned this out for himself in his own peculiar fashion, and have come to associate those figures of Moses and Aaron in the painted window, with certain people whom he had both seen and known. For once, when a visitor to the church asked him if this particular window was not erected to the memory of Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so, the old man replied, as he pointed to the Moses and Aaron,—

"Yes, sir; but they don't much fature the old couple!"

But I am digressing from my gipsy, and the narrative of his death and burial, as told me by our oldest inhabitant. This gipsy was an ordinary member of his tribe, and he lay ill of a pleurisy in the camp, in our country parish. They called in a surgeon from the neighbouring town; and, after much persuasion, the surgeon bled him. The man became worse; the surgeon's assistant came to see him, and proposed to bleed him again. But the gipsies were much averse to blood-letting; so they sent the assistant about his business, paid the surgeon's bill, and dispensed with his further services. The man then died. He had expressed a wish to be buried in his best clothes, which were a velvet coat with *half-crowns* shanked for buttons, and a waistcoat with *shillings* similarly shanked. But, his wish could not be carried out, as these valuable garments were stolen by a woman with whom he had lived, who forthwith decamped with her pilferings, leaving the gipsy to be buried in his second-best, without a shroud, in the very best of coffins.

"At the funeral," said my informant, "they had a hearse, and ostrich plumes: and about fifty gipsies, men and women, followed him; and when the church service was over, and the clergyman was gone, the gipsies staid behind in the churchyard, and had a service of their own. And, when a gipsy dies, you must know, sir, that they always burns everything belonging to him. First, they burnt his fiddle: a right-down good fiddler he was, and many's the time I've danced to him at our wake. And then they burnt a lot of beautiful Witney blankets, as were as good as new. And then they burnt a sight o' books, for he was quite a scholar—very big books they wos, too! I specially minds one on 'em—the biggest o' the hull lot! a book o' jawgraphy, as 'ud tell you the history o' the hull world, you understand, sir; and was chock full o' queer, outlandish picters. And then, there was his grinstan, that he used to go about the country with, a grindin' scissors and razors, and sich like: they couldn't burn him! so they carried him two miles, and then hove him right into the river. That's true, you may take my word for it, sir! for I was one as help'd 'em to carry it."

But to return to our own peculiar folk-lore.

There is a sanitary superstition in our country parish, which Mr. Milkinsop denounces as one of the latest passages from the farce of Folly, and has dramatised thus:

SCENE—The back premises of a Farm-house. Female domestic plucking the feathers from a half-killed hen, which is writhing with pain. Enter her Mistress, who expresses disgust at the foul proceeding.

Mrs. Good Gracious, girl! how can you be so cruel? Why, the hen isn't dead!

Dom. No, mum! I'm very sorry, mum; but—(as though answering a question)—I was in a hurry to come down, and I didn't wash my face this morning.

Mrs. (with rising doubts as to the girl's sanity in reference to her sanitary proceedings). Wash your face! Whatever does the girl mean! I did not say anything about washing your face. I said—(shouting to her, on the sudden supposition that she might be deaf)—that you were very cruel to pluck a hen that you've only half killed.

Dom. (placidly). Yes, mum! I'll go and wash my face directly.

Mrs. (bothered). Wash your face? Yes, you dirty slut! it wants washing. But first kill this poor thing, and put it out of its misery.

Dom. (confidentially). I can't, mum, till I've washed my face.

Mrs. (repressing an inclination to use bad language). Why not!

Dom. (with the tone of an instructor). La, bless me, mum! Why, don't you know as you can't kill any living thing till you've washed your face first? I'm sure that I tried for full ten minutes to wring this 'En's neck, and I couldn't kill her nohow. And all because I hadn't time to wash my face this morning.

[The mistress administers a homily to the domestic; the hen is put out of its misery, and the scene closes upon the domestic's ablutions.]

Our country parish holds the same bit of folk-lore with regard to the killing of pigs; so that when we wish to slay our favourite porkers and

Dorkings, the commonest feelings of humanity lead us first to ascertain if the executioner has washed his face.

When Christmas comes, we have some very pretty customs in our country parish; but, as I am here specially speaking of its folk-lore, I will, for the present, leave these customs to take care of themselves. For the customs that are retained in our old-world quarter, are quite as numerous as our scraps of folk-lore; and it would swell this paper to unreasonable dimensions, were I now to tell of our May-day customs, and our Curfew customs, and our Clemening customs, and our customs on Goody Tuesday and St. Thomas's Day; and our Christmas customs, with the carols, and waits, and morris-dancers; and that curious masque, or "Mumming," performed by some boys in our country parish, wherein King George, and Bold Bonaparte, and the Valiant Soldier, and the Turkish Knight, and Beelzebub, and Old Father Christmas, and the Doctor, and Little Devil-doubt, are the chief *dramatis personæ*. The mention, however, of Goody Tuesday reminds me of a piece of folk-lore connected with that day. We say, that if we eat pancakes on Goody Tuesday, and grey peas on Ash Wednesday, we shall have money in our purse all the year. It is Shrove Tuesday that we call by the name of Goody, or Goodish Tuesday; and Mr. Milkinsop inclines to the idea that this name is a rustic record of the shriving and confession customary to the day prior to the Reformation.

The letting-in of the New Year is an important matter in our country parish; though in our folk-lore regarding it, we are not quite so polite as usual: for we say, that if the first person who crosses your threshold on the New Year's morning is a male, it will bring you good luck through the ensuing year; whereas, if a female is your first visitor, you will have bad luck. Our carol-singers are up on a New Year's morning before it is light, and strive who shall be first at the various farm-houses. As soon as the inmates hear the song, they rise, and open the front door to admit the first lucky carol-singer into the house: they then conduct him through the house, and bow him out at the back door. You may be sure that he is not sent away empty; for, according to our folk-lore, he has brought good luck to that house for a whole twelvemonth. Of course, it is only the young gentlemen who are thus privileged to be the prognosticators of good luck.

Our farmers ought to be prosperous and well-to-do; for, as you see, they can ensure their yearly success on very easy conditions: and if they want to bring special good luck to their dairy, they take down the bough of mistletoe, and give it to the cow that calves first after New Year's Day. The cow devours it greedily; but sheep also do the same; and no wonder, if they like it. But the farmers ascribe the result to the mistletoe charm; and as their example aways those about them, it is not very wonderful that folk-lore should be found to flourish in our country parish.

CUTHBERT BEDE.

PEASANT PROPRIETORSHIP.



[See p. 167.]

I HAVE always believed that the stimulus of proprietorship is the most powerful that can be applied to labour, and was rejoiced to find that the greatest of modern writers upon political economy (Stuart Mill), in one of the most striking and interesting portions of his great work, sums up, on the whole, in its favour.* He says:—"If there is a first principle in intellectual education, it is this—that the discipline which does good to the mind is that in which the mind is active, not that in which it is passive. The secret for developing the faculties is to give them much to do, and much inducement to do it. Few things surpass, in this respect, the occupations and interests created by the ownership and cultivation of land" (vol. i. p. 331).

A Swiss statistical writer speaks of the "almost superhuman industry of peasant proprietors." Arthur Young says, "It is the magic of property which turns sand into gold." Michelet says it acts like a ruling passion upon the peasantry of France, and that in Flanders, the peasant cultivation is affirmed to produce heavier crops in equal circumstances of soil than the best cultivated districts of England and Scotland.

Having dwelt much on this subject, I was a good deal interested in the following simple narra-

tive, which I believe to be strictly founded on fact.

Joseph Austin, a bricklayer, in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, had often looked with a longing eye upon a small piece of land by the roadside—a portion of what is called "The Lord's Waste"; a term which reflects little credit on manorial rights or parochial management. He had never passed this spot without observing upon its capabilities for improvement, and being a house-builder by trade, and something of a castle-builder by nature, he constantly dreamt that he was at work in his favourite spot, with bricks and trowel.

At length, after much brooding upon his scheme, he made an application to the manor-court, and obtained a verbal permission to build there. Two of his neighbours—moved, as he said, by envy—threatened that if he began his house, they would pull it down. Upon this he applied a second time to the court, and obtained a legal permission, with the consent of all the copyholders, paying for the entry of his name on the court-rolls, and sixpence a-year quit-rent. And here we must do our country the justice to observe, that if a man of known industry and good character, like Joseph Austin, applies for an indulgence of this kind there is very little probability of its being refused.

* Chapters vi. and vii. vol. i., Principles of Political Economy.

Austin was at this time forty-two years of age. He had a wife and four children, and his whole stock of worldly wealth amounted to fourteen shillings. But men who deserve friends are seldom long unbefriended, and a master with whom he usually worked at harvest sold him an old cottage for nine guineas, which he undertook to work out.

He had, for some time, been preparing *bats*—a species of brick made of clay and straw well beaten together (18 inches long, 12 wide, and 4 deep), not burnt, but dried in the sun. With these and the materials of the old cottage he went to work.

The *bats* made a better wall than lath and plaster with a coating of clay. Less wood is required, and the house is stronger and warmer, but they must be protected from rain as much as possible, especially towards the foundation.

As he had to live and support his family by his daily labour, this building could only be carried on when his regular day's work was over. He continued it by moonlight, and frequently heard the clock strike twelve before he withdrew from an occupation which engaged all the interest and energy of his character. All this time he had to rise at four o'clock in the morning, to walk four miles to his work, returning the same distance in the evening.

If his constitution had not been unusually strong, his zeal could hardly have carried him through these extraordinary exertions. But he possessed an unweariable frame of body as well as an invincible spirit. When the building was one story high, and the beams were to be placed, the carpenter discovered that the timbers from the old cottage were too short. This was a severe disappointment. Nothing, however, discouraged him. He covered the half-erected walls with a few loads of furze, and immediately began a new building, after the same fashion, only smaller, and connected with the original one. Working at this with as much vigour as perseverance, he succeeded in housing his family in it, with tolerable comfort, at the end of four months from the laying of the foundation.

This great object being accomplished, he went on more leisurely with what remained to be done, spending money upon it as he found he could spare it. After five years he raised the second story; in ten, it was tiled and coated. Although his family had now increased to eight, there was not only house-room for themselves, but another apartment which let for a guinea a year.

The money his cottage had cost him altogether was about 50*l.*, which sum he saved from his daily labour in the course of ten years. The house and garden occupied about twenty poles of ground, and the garden was in admirable order. Nor did he omit all that might set it off to the best advantage. One of the fences was of sweet-briar and roses, mixed with woodbine, and another of the dwarf plum-tree. Against the back of the house he had planted a vine, a nectarine, and a peach-tree. A single row of quickset, which he cut down six times whilst it was young, fenced it strongly from the road.

Meanwhile his children growing up, and Mrs.

Austin being, like her husband, of an active and enterprising character, it was proposed amongst them that they should endeavour to rent a few acres of land, on which they might be able to keep a cow. The same kind master who had formerly befriended Austin was yet more disposed to do so, after many years' experience of his courageous and persevering industry. He let him have ten and afterwards fourteen acres of pasture-land, on which they kept two cows. The rent was never a shilling in arrear, and the produce enabled them to make a profit and to keep several pigs.

The clergyman of the parish became much interested in this family, and used frequently to draw from Austin the history of his difficulties and his perseverance. He justly regarded himself as having attained a proud position, for he had risen to independence and comfort in the noblest manner. He was a great advocate for small holdings for the poor, and always said it was a never-failing spur to industry and exertion.

"You like to see the neatness of my cottage and garden, sir, which you say differ from the greatest number of those you visit; but why should not such a state of things be more common? As long as every nook of land is let to the great farmers, and nothing left for the poor but to labour hard in their youth, and go on the parish in their old age, I fear it cannot be expected; but I am sure it is the way to better the condition of the peasantry of this country, and to make them contented and attached to the soil where they live, and to the gentry who live near them."

"Yes, but few people manage as well as you do. They may have industry and a desire to help themselves, instead of depending on others; but you could not have effected this, without a good deal of knowledge."

"Well, sir," said Austin, "I won't deny but that it was a great advantage to me, in the building of my house, to have served so long as I did to a good master mason, where I also picked up some little knowledge of joiner's work, and never neglected any opportunity of learning all I could about agricultural matters. In short, I never let a hint go by me, but kept eyes and ears open, and always employed; but any man is able to do the like. One advantage I had, sir; I had kind friends, and nothing encourages poor folks more than finding that the great folks are ready to lend a helping-hand when a man is striving to help himself."

The good effected by this family was far from being limited to the example they presented to the neighbourhood. One instance of it deserves to be mentioned.

It happened one day that Austin had occasion to go to a distant part of the country; in returning home late he lost his way across a lonely tract of moor with which he was unacquainted. Being fatigued with a long day's march, he was glad to discover a cottage in the midst of this wild and desolate scene, although, upon approaching it, he perceived it was little above a hovel; still there were appearances of care and cleanliness

which encouraged him to knock at the door and ask permission to sit down and rest himself for a short time.

The woman who opened the door was a remarkable looking person. Her features were strong but regular, such as in youth had probably been beautiful in no ordinary degree, but care and hard toil seemed to have usurped all of grace except a womanly expression of tenderness in the large sad eyes. She received Austin doubtfully, but gave him leave to enter, and he observed that the inside of this uninviting hovel was far from being neglected or comfortless. There were even traces of an endeavour after cheerfulness and decoration. There were flowers in bright scarlet flower-pots in the window, looking well-tended; coloured prints on the white-washed walls, tied up with bright coloured scraps of ribbon; but on the bed lay a piteous object—an idiot-child of about eight or ten years of age, so entirely devoid of sense as to be almost without the power of motion, yet beautifully neat, clean, and carefully dressed. Austin endeavoured to enter into conversation with the mother, whose quaint looks and neglected attire contrasted painfully with that of her idiot-child. He made some remark upon the neatness of the house, and having been gifted by nature with one of those frank and kindly manners which it is next to impossible to withstand, the poor woman's reserve gradually melted under its influence, and she told him somewhat of her story.

She said she had been deserted by her husband about ten years ago; he had feared to face the poverty that was threatening him, after failing in a small business with which they had begun their married life, and had left her to struggle with penury alone. She had been confined of her poor idiot-child, and for some time had subsisted upon charity; but this existence was repugnant to her spirit, and as her calamity became more apparent with the infant's growth, she had shunned the intercourse of her neighbours, and had resolved to retire to some solitary spot where she might work for her bread and that of her boy.

As is always the case with natural ties, he had become dearer to her in proportion to his helplessness, and she determined to live and to employ her health, strength, and time for him. She wandered to a distance from her native village, and got permission from a humane farmer to occupy a hovel on one of the sheep-walks of his farm, which had been considered in too hopeless a state of decay to be inhabited by the shepherd. The shepherd, however, proved a kind friend to her. (The poor help one another to a degree which is often a reproach to their wealthier brethren.) She established herself, with his assistance, in the little cottage; worked out her rent—1*l.* a-year—and earned her child's food and clothing by labouring on the farmer's land at picking stones or weeds. She was allowed to bring her helpless child with her; and carefully wrapping him up and placing him on a bed of straw in some out-house, she would devote her dinner-hour to feeding and attending upon him, forgetting her own hunger and weariness in the delight of being able to minister to his.

She said, with the tears in her dark eyes, that he was the only thing she lived for, and the delight of her lonely life—for him she had ornamented the walls and procured the flowers, because the gay colours seemed to attract the poor boy's vacant gaze. Austin asked if the neighbours were kind to her. She answered that she saw no one but the shepherd, who had assisted her to establish herself. She did not want neighbours. She had her boy to occupy her, and she earned enough to support him. What more did she need? Nobody could feel for her boy but herself—most people would be revolted by the sight of him. She did not care to see any one. Hitherto she had done well, but trouble was now threatening her. After this week her employer was to leave the farm, and as no one else knew her, she was at a loss how she could get employment. Except the shepherd, most people shunned her—it was no wonder. She had first shunned them. Still she must think of something. Her boy must not starve, even if she were reduced to beg his bread.

There was something heroic about this woman, and her devoted love for her helpless child, that touched a cord in Austin's heart. He was a thoroughly religious man, and his mind reverted habitually, whether in sorrow or in joy, to the source of all comfort and all hope. He touched upon that sacred subject to her, but was disappointed to find not the slightest response. It appeared either as if her religious feelings had become confused and indistinct from want of cultivation and communication, or else (and which he thought more probable) that misfortune and calamity had had a deadening influence, and had darkened her sense of dependence upon a Father who invites us to cast our cares upon Him.

After some conversation with her, it suddenly occurred to this kind-hearted man that, poor as he was, he might benefit this isolated being. Communication with his wife and children he felt certain would prove beneficial to a character soured by penury and solitude, and for her labour he could afford a fair remuneration. He therefore proposed to her to work upon his land, assist his wife with the cows and with the domestic drudgery, and offered her the same wages she had received from the farmer. She joyfully accepted his proposal, and undertook to be at her work by eight o'clock every morning, provided she might bring her child with her.

This was willingly granted, and her work allotted, which she faithfully and diligently performed, attending with the utmost punctuality. The hour's rest in the middle of the day was devoted to the idiot child, who was comfortably lodged on a bed of hay in the cow-shed. She became a great favourite with Mrs. Austin and the children, and her labour was fully worth the humble wages she earned.

Nothing could be happier and more prosperous than this little colony. The children were sent for education to the village-school, and as they grew older they assisted in the little farm. Upon the produce of this farm they almost entirely subsisted, and the feeling of proprietorship added a zeal to their efforts which tells in manual labour

after a fashion, which no other motive is ever found to supply.

But it pleased the Almighty that this remarkable example of honest, hard-working perseverance, hitherto blessed and stimulated by success, should be a further example of humility under affliction. "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Thus may many of us say, to whom calamity comes as a stranger, and as a phantom, to scare away the peaceful and even tenour of an innocent life!

The first blow fell upon the poor deserted wife. Her child sickened and died, and it would perhaps be impossible to form any conception of her misery, on the part of those who have never known what it is to live in another's life, and that life one that depends on our exertions. A fresh creation, as it were, every day drawing its daily life from the fountain of our affection and devotion.

As might be expected, she sorrowed as one that had no hope. She refused employment; she left not her home; she saw no one. Unfortunately, Mrs. Austin's confinement had recently taken place, and she had been unable to look after her; but feeling now sufficiently strong to go to her cottage, on a bright September morning she set forth with a little basket of provisions for the poor mourner, little dreaming that the happy home she left was, ere night, to be turned into the house of desolation and woe.

On Mrs. Austin's reaching the lonely cottage, she observed its unusually bleak and deserted appearance. Not a footstep was to be seen near the door; the path was almost obliterated; a miserable hovel it had been at the best, but now indeed it was marked as the abode of wretchedness itself. The cracked mud wall was not more than four feet in height, and the roof had no other covering than the damp green moss, under which the thatch had rotted away. The moor sheep, lying under the black stones which everywhere appeared amid the surrounding heath and peat, seemed better housed and sheltered than the inmate of this abode of misery. The bed was in disorder, and the window, which was broken and stopped up with weeds, was already obscured with dirt and cobwebs. The prints had mildewed on the walls; the flower-pots were still in their places; but the plants were dead, and drops of damp had collected on their decayed leaves.

The poor woman—sullen in her woe,—was sitting erect on the bed with folded arms, and a countenance that afforded no encouragement to kindness. From her neighbours she had received no aid or consolation, for they had begun to abuse and hate her as a witch; and the overseers, with whom she was compelled to have intercourse had brought no unusual degree of feeling and charity to the execution of their office. But nothing could repel the Christian benevolence of Mrs. Austin; she suggested schemes of employment; she made offers of assistance; she pressed upon her the duty of employment, the consolations of religion.

"God," she said, "will give you strength to go on; do but make a beginning. Do not give yourself up to this sad, stern way of taking your grief. It looks like impatience."

"And you would be impatient, too!" she re-

torted. "You never lost a living soul you loved; but what if you were to lose *all* you loved! *All* at once! No—no! I thank you, mistress! but leave me to my grief. Nobody has felt grief like mine!"

Mrs. Austin was compelled at length, most unwillingly, to abandon all hope of doing any good. She made one more effort to turn the poor woman's heart towards the only source of consolation, but her sun was darkened. She could only look upon it as the source of sorrow. Her notions of religion were too indistinct to afford her any comfort; they had never been cultivated, and the fruit was therefore not to be found when it was wanted. Nor was there any of that pride which enables so many to bear up against affliction. It was vehement grief, acting upon a strong mind, and strong frame, unmixed—unsophisticated—unalleviated; and for want of the most precious of all the Almighty's gifts to man—unalleviable.

But now the consoler was to need consolation. Mrs. Austin returned late to her home to find it in a state of affliction that baffles description. As the tidings burst upon her amid the sobs and groans of her children, that their father's corpse lay in the adjoining room, she sank down senseless. He had been busied about some repairs which were required in the roof. The ladder on which he stood had slipped, and being a heavy man, his fall had been violent. Some sharp stones lay below, and one moment had ended his useful and energetic life.

Crushed and stunned by her grief, in the first instance, Mrs. Austin's character was not one in which exertion would fail, whilst she had the power to serve God and her fellow-creatures. Her children rallied round her, giving and finding strength, and in their sympathy and affection she found her best earthly consolation. The eldest son, though still under fourteen years of age, was a lad of sense and conduct, and had inherited his father's courage and energy. He redoubled his activity and punctuality. His sisters and younger brother seconded his exertions, and after the lapse of some months the routine of the family life was resumed.

Mrs. Austin, however, could not but feel the utmost anxiety respecting their future fate—and the relieving officers made their appearance one day in her cottage and proceeded with more of kindness and consideration than is usual in such cases, to talk over the possibility of maintenance which her circumstances afforded. They proposed to take her five youngest children into the house. It may be difficult to say what system of affording relief to the poor is to be preferred; but this may be affirmed without hesitation, that whatever system tends to weaken the domestic affections by separating parents from children, is radically bad. When this was proposed to the poor widow, she answered in great agitation that she would rather die in working to maintain her children, than part with any of them. If necessary, she would accompany them all into the workhouse; and there labour with them, but never should they be divided except it were the will of God. Still, she added, if the landlord would continue her in "the farm," she would undertake to bring up all her ten

children without any help at all from the parish. This noble spirited woman had, fortunately, a benevolent landlord to deal with. He told her she should continue his tenant and hold the land, rent free for the first year. At the same time he gave private directions to his receiver, not to call upon her afterwards, thinking that even with that indulgence it would be a difficult undertaking to bring up so large a family. But this further liberality was unnecessary. By her high-principled exertions she set the example to her children of patient and unremitting toil, and she had in return from them every assistance which their age and strength enabled them to render.

One evening it happened that the lonely woman who had formerly been their only labourer, found her way to their yet cheerful and happy home. The day's labour was over, and they had gathered round the tea-table. Their mother was the only privileged one who was allowed the luxury of tea; the rest having respectable bowls of milk and bread. Toil and sorrow had already added many furrows to Mrs. Austin's open and honest brow, but there was a calmness and repose upon it which struck the other, who had never known a moment's rest since *her* sorrow, nor ever sought to check its selfish indulgence. She had made it her thought by day and her dream by night; and from suffering her mind to dwell on her loss incessantly, she had nearly brought herself to a state of phrenzy. Her wild eye was fixed upon Mrs. Austin, who sat surrounded by her children, the most admirable spectacle that humanity can afford.

It would require the pen of Sir Walter Scott to draw the gradual moral influence which this living picture of piety, patience, and fortitude exercised over the diseased mind of the sufferer, whose calamity, though immeasurably the least, was immeasurably the most to be pitied. Her admiration for them all knew no bounds. She entreated to be allowed to work with them, for them; to be admitted, on any terms, into so blessed a community. She promised that her labour should prevent her being a burden to them; and that Mrs. Austin would find she was of use to the younger part of her family, as well as in the most humble offices.

Mrs. Austin felt that even were it injurious to her interests, she could not as a Christian reject the prayer of the poor woman; and that her continuing amongst them afforded the only chance of arousing her from the melancholy state into which she had fallen. It is needless to add that the result was entirely successful, and that she gradually assimilated herself to the character of those she so deeply revered and loved. Mrs. Austin had the satisfaction of finding that her Christian act proved beneficial, as a temporal measure, for the poor dependant was of the greatest service to them in many ways; and that the introduction into the establishment of a second person of mature age was a material convenience.

The rent was forthcoming with perfect regularity after the year of grace. They held the land till eight of the ten children were placed in service; and Mrs. Austin then resigned it to take the employment of a nurse, which enabled her to

provide for the remaining two during the short time they required support; and this she found a more suitable employment for her declining years. Had the five children been sent to the Union, they would have cost the parish hardly less than 70*l.* a year; and the widow, had she been deprived of the land, would have been compelled, with the remaining five, to have had recourse also to parochial relief.

I must not forget to add, that the devoted servant continued her labours until they were transferred to a small farmer who had married one of Mrs. Austin's daughters; and that, treated with care and kindness, she died at an advanced age, having nursed her young mistress's children, and been the delight and comfort of many a youthful and merry heart.

H. E.

THE RURAL LABOURER.

HIS HEALTH.

If there were such a person as a youth of the working-class who considered bodily health the greatest of all blessings, so that it should be the main object in life, he would choose to be a rural labourer. It has always been supposed that a life spent in the open air, in full exercise, among pleasant objects, and without care must be the very best for health and long life. The peasantry of England, that "bold peasantry, their country's pride," has been traditionally considered a class favoured by God and man, dwelling amidst the most charming scenes of life, and exempt from its wearing cares.

There must have been, according to our modern notions of welfare and comfort, many drawbacks on such a condition, even in the times most favourable to rural labourers; and there has been a long period during which it would have been a mere mockery to describe the ploughman or hedger as a favourite of Nature or society. Yet it has been true, throughout the dreary period of his depression, that he had as good a chance of health and long life (supposing him sober and prudent), as any other working-man, and better than almost any other. Other things being equal, he ought to live eight years longer than men employed in some dozen of occupations which might be pointed out. The deaths in his class, in the vigour of their years, is nine in the thousand, yearly; whereas the mortality of dwellers in unhealthy cities is, at the same time of life, twelve in the thousand; while the mortality of persons of all ages in the healthiest parts of England, is seventeen in the thousand.

It is true, these facts are taken from the best specimens; that is, from members of some sort of Friendly Society; and, therefore, to a certain degree, enlightened, sober, and prudent; but still, the advantages of the occupation are so unquestionable that we might expect beforehand that agricultural labourers would have less to do with the doctor than men of perhaps any other calling.

Yet it is a common thing for residents in villages and rural places to see bent old men shuffling along, or to meet one hobbling between two sticks, or to hear from behind the hedge the young man's cough, which tells to the experienced ear that he will never draw a full, free breath again. It is a common thing in country houses to hear of some young girl taken into the kitchen to train, or some boy for whom employment is made about the premises, because the father has died untimely, and the widow is left with so many children that neighbours must help, if they are to be kept off the rates. Sometimes it is fever that has done the mischief—fever which carries off those who can least be spared, and makes more orphans than any war we have ever been engaged in. Sometimes it is brain disease, or exhaustion from drink (a very strange sort of drink). In cider countries, it may be from colic, or stone, or some form of violent indigestion. In a marshy country, it may be from a long course of agues, or an obstinate dysentery. Too often it is from actual starvation, though the symptoms

may be taken for the real cause, and various names of diseases may be given to as many cases which ought never to have occurred at all. It is quite natural that thinkers, meditating in their libraries, should decide that rural labourers must be the healthiest of mankind: but the country gentleman, abroad in the fields, and at the Board of Guardians, may easily doubt whether there are more piteous cases of sickness and death among the poor in manufacturing towns, than in his district of merry England.

If we review the life of any rural labourer who has reached old age, in order to see what his life has been like, we must necessarily dwell upon the most unfavourable period for that class known in our whole history—the period before the repeal of the Corn Laws. When we see how bad it was, we must comfort ourselves with the thought that it is over, and that, if ever men might anticipate "a good time coming" for any class, we may now for our peasantry. The evils of former adversity have not yet passed away; and that is the chief reason why we should carefully bear them in mind: but, though thousands of labouring men die every year who ought to live for many years longer, we see that the next generation must have a much better chance of fulfilling their natural term of life.

Let us see what has been the career of a labourer of the best order, as labourers were fifty years ago. The grass has not yet grown on his grave; and he worked to the latest day that he could hold spade or bill-hook; so that he is no obsolete specimen, but a man of the time, and an example of his calling. He shall be a good man, and an apt labourer; and his wife shall be a good woman, dutiful and housewifely; and their children such as might be expected from such parents. They shall live in an agricultural county where wealthy men's estates almost join for an extent of many miles, and where, therefore, there is understood to be employment for every working man, woman, and child.

In John's young days nobody questioned the luck of the rural labourer, who was provided for, if any man was. Those were the days of agricultural prosperity, when the farmers made a sudden start, and grew grand in their way of living, and when their landlords got high rents, while there was famine in the towns. Farm-labourers had low wages, because the Poor Law pressed heavily upon the farmers; but every hedger and ditcher was sure of a maintenance in one way or another. If wages failed, he could demand a subsistence; and then his wages would be paid out of the rate.

In times like these John arrived at that memorable day in the life of a boy—the day of first going out to work for wages. He was but seven; but he felt like a little man—and very properly. He was a bird-keeper first; and after a time he watched the cattle and the poultry, and got in the turnips for the beasts, and helped in the potato and bean planting. His work hours were as long as his father's; from eight till four in midwinter, and from six to six in summer. His wages rose from 9d. a week to 1s. 6d. while at this light kind of work. He must have been a strong boy; for at eleven years old he began to lead horses at

plough, earning 2s. 6d. a week; and at fifteen he could hold the plough itself, and drive the team, and began to mow, and to help in the harvest field, earning then 4s. a week. As he became a rather tall man, and a hearty worker, his growth could not have been checked by either labour or want. His mother said his food cost half-a-crown a week; and so it ought, as he earned it, and wanted it for his growth. At the then price of bread, he could not make out with less than eighteen pennyworth; and the other shilling paid for potatoes, butter or cheese, milk, and afterwards tea; together with his share of the bacon from his father's pig, and some occasional cabbages from the garden. He earned his bacon and greens, his father said, by his help in the garden at over hours.

Long before he was twenty he was earning men's wages: that is, 9s. a week, with occasional opportunities of making more. He must have found or made many such opportunities; for he had laid by largely when he married at five-and-twenty. His parents had favoured him as much as they could; for they were proud of him, and he was in every way a credit to them. The young woman he married was a fit partner for him. She had laid by money in service, and had gained friends there; so that it was a prosperous and promising marriage. Neither John nor Susan had any learning. Neither could read; but both were lively and intelligent. They had 50l. laid by when they determined to marry: and, as John was not in the least likely to come upon the rate, he was chosen for superior and well-paid work such as is carefully kept out of the hands of pauper labourers. They took a cottage of four rooms at 5l. a year, and a garden at a separate rent, large enough to grow potatoes and cabbages for themselves and the pig, even after the house was full of children. For the greater part of his life, from the day he entered this cottage, John paid poor-rate. It was with him a matter of conscience and of pride; and it was a dark day to him when at last he was obliged to give it up; and a darker still when he came upon the rate himself. He thought it hard, after his course of honest toil; but there were his wife and idiot daughter to be considered; and there was no help for it. This, however, did not happen till a dozen years ago.

After his marriage, the complaints of agricultural distress became more frequent and more bitter. Few townspeople believed the truth of them, seeing what a dash the farmers cut at intervals, and what regular grumblers they were; but the thing was true enough, as John could have borne witness, though he could not have explained the reason.

He was better off than most of his class; for he worked on the estate of a nobleman who knew him by name and valued him, and his father before him: but the agent must do as others did; and as times grew bad, he retrenched labour and wages. It was well understood that families could not exist on what they earned or received from the parish; and private charity was nearly driven out by the operation of the Poor Law.

How, then, did they live? Nearly all were in

debt to the shop, and held out for a time on credit. A more important resource was poaching. It is not my present business to describe the state of society as it then was. I mention the poaching to account for whole families not being starved when they had no sufficient income to support them. Sometimes they ate, in haste and secrecy, the hare or rabbits they obtained; and oftener they sold the game they got on winter nights to the agents of London poulterers, gaining more money on a Saturday night than by the whole week's toil of the entire family.

John was never tempted by practices of this kind. He was far above them. As his family came on fast, and earnings diminished, he worked harder. That his children should go to school he was resolved, for he felt the disadvantage of being unable to read and write: and to school they went—the elder ones, and for as long as he could manage it.

Before he had been married eight years, the trouble of sickness entered his home.

During his wife's fifth confinement, when he could not afford such attendance as at first, a sad accident happened. The eldest child, seven, was taking care of three little ones before the door, when one of the boys, in rough play, laid her head open with a shovel. A long illness followed, and she grew up an idiot.

By degrees, the money store in the bank all drained away; and then John was not so comfortably dressed as formerly. He could not change his clothes when wet, and went ill shod to his work. His feet were often wet all day; and he had not always dry ones at home. He had never been taught the mischief of sleeping in his day-shirt and flannel waistcoat, and had a notion of its being somehow a wholesome proceeding. When his wife became overtaken with her large family, and the washing was a heavy business, John spared too much in clean shirts. He began to feel changes of weather "in all his bones," as he said; and his work became less easy to him in cold and damp seasons.

At the same time, the domestic table fell off in quality. For several years there had always been a goodly dish of meat on Sundays, baked in a dishful of potatoes; and two or three times a week there had been pies or meat-dumplings, made from the cheaper parts of the carcase of ox or sheep, timely bespoken from the butcher; or, very frequently, a dinner of "fry" when a neighbouring pig was killed, obtained by exchange for vegetables, or an hour's jobbing in some garden or at some fence.

As times grew worse, there was less and less of all this; and bacon became the only meat ever seen on the table, except in pig-killing week. Every effort was made to feed the growing children, body and mind. John denied himself the help in the field of one boy for nine years, which were given to schooling. It was not his fault that the self-denial was nearly useless. At the end of nine years the lad could not do more than "read a chapter" in a way half-intelligible to himself, and not at all intelligible to his eager parents, and just scrawl a letter in large, ill-spelt, ill-chosen words. The other boy

was necessarily called off very early from his studies, and never could read at all. He was the better workman, though the "scholar" of the family did not want wit. The fault lay in the quality of the school.

The younger boy had the advantage of his father's talk and instruction as he helped him in hedge, ditch, or furrow; and this was better than doing nothing at school. As to the instruction, the boy grew up handy and diligent; and, though too fond of money, able and willing to soften his parents' hard lot. As to the father's talk—it was not what it had been. He was careworn: he was growing rheumatic, and lost sleep by the pain: he had no longer the flow of spirits of a hearty, well-fed, open-air labourer. His wife, too, was wearing down. Their minds grew contracted; and that feebleness of thought and feeling began to appear which is one consequence of overwork and under-feeding.

But how blessed was their state, even now, in comparison with that of many—even with most—of their neighbours! They themselves were neither unaware of this, nor unthankful for it, nor proud of their superiority. Every winter some cottage household was left desolate by the father or brother being carried off to jail for poaching, or carried to the grave, slain in the woods by keepers' guns. All the year round there were wives and mothers hanging round the beer-shop or ale-house at midnight, trying in vain to get at the sots within to take them home. The doors were closed; and within were the victims, lying on or under the benches stupified by something else than beer. It would be a painful, but a useful thing to know how many rural labourers die in a year of the drugged beer so familiar to residents in some of our agricultural counties. In the morning the victims are stupid, headachy, sick, and powerless for work. Their limbs grow shaky, their tempers violent, and their ideas confused, till some attack of brain or stomach carries them off, or they sink into a state of weakness and folly, and they are reported dead of "fits," or "cholera," or "decline." John and his sons have escaped these dangers by being honest and sober men. Yet there were persons—not the wisest and best certainly—but well-meaning neighbours, who asked, when seeing John's funeral go by, how far he had been better off than his neighbours for his pride and honour, and his abstemious ways. He used himself to doubt whether either of his sons would ever be the stout man he once was: and neighbours then also asked one another how John was the better at sixty for having been such a stout fellow at twenty.

At sixty John was indeed sadly bent, and tremulous, and deaf. It was surprising that he could do such excellent work still with so feeble-looking a frame. He well earned his nine shillings a week, which was as much as any man of his class, except a few herdsmen and teamsters, was able to get. Some of the children had died young, two daughters (the third was the imbecile one) were supporting themselves, and the two sons were barely living on a precarious nine shillings a week in the same district. They were always welcome to a dinner at their father's, when out of work, as long as

there was anything to set on the table: but it became a question, at one time, whether there would still be enough for the three poor creatures at home.

The estates changed hands; and a young man succeeded to them who had more power over human welfare than is often consigned to a man of his years. His own wants, however, were paramount in his mind and heart,—the bottomless needs of a man of pleasure. So he wrote to his agent that it seemed to him that John and two others must now be above sixty years of age, and therefore somewhat past their work; and his positive orders were that their wages should be reduced to six shillings a week. It strikes one that the young man and the old must both have heard with very vivid feelings that passage read in church, from the Epistle of James, about the rich man and the hire of their labourers. It is true, John was so deaf that for a time there was no instruction for him at church,—unable either to hear or read: but somebody gave him an ear-trumpet; and he cried through the whole service the first time he used it. One would like to know that the young landlord cried through the whole service after hearing that passage in the Epistle of James.

Before long the young man died, as such unprofitable servants of society often do,—untimely in every way. The wages of the three old men were immediately raised to what they were before. But it was too late for John,—except as a pleasure. For a time he tried to work three days in a week; and there was nothing for it but accepting an allowance from the parish. Then it came to two days in a week; and then to half-days. His children did what they could; and the old couple never actually wanted food and clothes in their latter days. But their long toil and hardship and anxiety had caused them sore ailments of body and mind. Their minds were narrow and weak to a degree which made it incredible that they were the same couple that had begun life so cheerily. They had no new knowledge, no conversation, no interests beyond the care of getting bread. Both had miserable nerves, as under-fed and anxious people always have; and John's deafness and his wife's weakness shut them up within themselves. At last, old Susan was undeniably childish; and one day, John sank his head upon his breast, was carried to his bed, and died,—a martyr to rheumatism, as the common talk has it.

Such was the life of the best sort of agricultural labourer in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is so painful and humiliating that it might not be justifiable to exhibit it, if it were not for one of two objects,—either to record a past state of society, or to obtain a reform of an existing one. I have had both these objects in view. There is much reform needed, at this moment, in the treatment of agricultural labourers, before their lot can at all answer to the conception of it as one of the healthiest and happiest of vocations: and, on the other hand, we all believe it impossible that the condition of the labourer should ever retrogress to what it has been.

His vocation is now becoming one of skilled labour; and his qualifications and his wages must

both rise. For clodpoles we shall henceforth have agricultural operatives, working by machinery, and paid according to their intelligence and skill. We see this happening already, and more and more extensively every year. We see prizes won,—not so much now for sparing the rates, but for superior skill in the arts of agriculture, and for success in the accomplishments of horticulture. We see leisure hours and spare pennies spent in floricultural rivalry, instead of at the public-house. We see men of John's order manifesting his virtues, with a fairer course before them.

Under such improved circumstances the health and longevity of the class must steadily and rapidly improve. Still, we shall have to go on registering unnecessary deaths, and grieving over unnecessary misery from year to year, while our peasantry have not habitations admitting of health, comfort, and decency, and while they are kept ignorant of the knowledge, and untrained in the habits, by which men's health and life are put, as it were, into their own hands. Whenever this duty of rich men to the labourers who have tilled their fields is done, the lot of the peasant may again become what it once was, and more deservedly than ever,—the cheerful theme of the poet and the moralist.

HARRIET MARTINEAU.